DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 886 CS 211 612

AUTHOR	Duke, Charles R.; Strong, William J.
TITLE	Utah Pilot Writing Assessment for Grades 3 and 8. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Utah State Univ., Logan. Dept. of Secondary Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Utah State Office of Education, Salt Lake City.
PUB DATE	Jan 88
NOTE	169p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Education; Evaluation Methods; Grade 3; Grade 8; Models; Student Evaluation; *Writing Evaluation; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	Utah

ABSTRACT

This final report presents findings of a project designed to develop a model for state-wide assessment of student writing/language skills in conjunction with Utah's Core Curriculum in English/Language Arts (UCCLA). The project tested procedures for collecting baseline data on writing/language skills at grades 3 and 8. The report consists of the following sections: project overview; summary of findings; project design; data collection and handling; results of the writing assessment; discussion of findings; analysis of writing errors; recommendations; and references. Appendixes consist of: (1) pilot test schools, 1987-1988; (2) pilot test coding sheet; (3) test administration materials; (4) sample letter to superintendents; (5) sample letter to principals; (6) representative comments from teacher survey; (7) directions for scoring; (8) mean comparison tables; (9) third reading tables; (10) error analyses; and (11) writing-prompt materials. (MM)

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UTAH PILOT WRITING ASSESSMENT
for
GRADES 3 AND 8

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FINAL REPORT

on

UTAH PILOT WRITING ASSESSMENT

for

GRADES 3 AND 8

Submitted to Utah State Office of Education
by Charles R. Duke and William J. Strong
Department of Secondary Education/Utah Writing Project
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January 1988

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January 8, 1988

Ms. Nancy Livingston
State Office of Education
250 E. 500 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Ms. Livingston:

As co-directors of the Utah Writing Project, we are submitting our final report which describes the development and field testing of a pilot writing assessment for Grades 3 and 8. This assessment was keyed to selected standards from the Utah Core Curriculum in Language Arts.

The Utah Writing Project began this project in June 1987 and has carried out a variety of activities since that time. The Project has involved over 50 teachers in the pilot assessment and has had participation from 16 school districts throughout the state.

The Overview and Summary of Findings which begin the accompanying report will provide you with a synopsis of our activities. The full report provides a detailed accounting of the writing assessment and the results as well as a series of recommendations.

We hope that our development and field-testing of materials will provide the State Office of Education with useful information as it looks ahead to planning a state-wide writing assessment in the near future. We would be most interested in discussing our findings and recommendations with staff of the State Office at their convenience.

With this final report, we believe we have fulfilled our obligations under the contract assigned to us by the State Office in June of 1987. We hope this report will receive careful attention and will lead to further discussions concerning writing assessment in the state of Utah.

Sincerely,

Charles R Duke
Charles R. Duke
Co-director, Utah Writing Project

William Strong
William Strong
Co-director, Utah Writing Project

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I. OVERVIEW

The pilot test of the Utah Assessment of Writing/Language skills represents an effort to develop a model for state-wide assessment of student writing/language skills in conjunction with Utah's Core Curriculum in English/Language Arts (UCCLA). The specific goals of this assessment were as follows:

1. To establish procedures for administering and scoring writing samples
2. To develop and test a variety of writing tasks ("prompts") and scoring rubrics to determine their effectiveness
3. To establish procedures for reporting the data collected by such testing

Background.

The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) contracted with the Utah Writing Project (UWP), situated at Utah State University, to conduct a pilot project to test procedures for collecting baseline data on writing/ language skills at grades 3 and 8. Since the overall aim of this assessment was to test the validity of various standards set by the Core Curriculum, implemented in 1985, all writing tasks were developed in relation to core standards.

The UWP was charged with development of test instruments, field testing, and analysis/interpretation of the data. To provide an appropriate assessment of writing at grades 3 and 8 keyed to the Utah Core Curriculum in Language Arts (UCCLA), UWP had to develop materials that would be responsive to the variations in ability found at the two grade levels and distinguish between writing that fulfilled a particular task and that which did not.

The assumption that underlies the UWP approach is that every writing task represents an effort to accomplish a certain goal. If the writing task is carefully defined, some writing strategies will ensure success in accomplishing the task; others will not. For example, a writing task that requests information in letter form assumes that certain strategies result in the requested information being presented clearly and accurately; a letter that does not accomplish this task, no matter how well written, is inappropriate.

To develop assessment materials, it was necessary to identify certain goals--in this case, the standards from the UCCLA--and create "writing prompts" or tasks that defined the goals as accurately as possible. An exercise in which students write about anything of interest would result in a writing sample, but would yield little information regarding the Core Standards.

Because this project was designed to gather information useful for a large scale writing assessment, the UWP developed writing tasks which vary in the amount of information they provide and the degree of choice they permit the respondents. In developing the tasks, the UWP followed six steps:

Step 1. Fourteen teachers who had been previously trained by the UWP in a basic summer institute were identified. These teachers represented both elementary and secondary school levels. During the summer of 1987, these teachers attended a three week institute at Utah State University during which the following occurred: (1) development of writing prompts keyed to selected standards in the Core for grades 3 and 8; (2) development of scoring procedures; (3) mini-pilot testing of selected prompts and scoring rubrics at grades 3 and 8.

Step 2. Sixteen school districts were selected at random according to size and geographical location. Superintendents of each district received letters inviting them to participate. All agreed to do so, with two schools, an elementary and a secondary or junior high school chosen from each district. Just before testing, a junior high from one of these districts could not participate; therefore, a junior high from another district was added. Principals at each school made the selection of two third grade classes or two eighth grade classes to serve as the test population. (See Appendices A and B for a list of districts and schools participating in the study).

Step 3. Procedures for administering the test were developed and a schedule established for test administration (see Appendix for sample test administration materials). Testing of approximately 1700 students occurred during the first two weeks of October, 1987.

Step 4. Holistic scoring sessions involving Utah public school teachers from both elementary and secondary levels were held on three different occasions. Approximately 53 teachers participated in the scoring of writing samples.

Step 5. Data from the scoring sessions were analyzed by computer.

Step 6. This data was incorporated into the final report.

Organization of this Report

The first three sections of the following report contain a summary of the design and methodology of the assessment. The remaining sections present the results of the assessment with accompanying discussion.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The process for development of writing prompts (analysis of UCCLA standards, mini-field testing, rubric development, and full field-testing) yielded useful materials for large-scale assessment.

2. The materials developed to support the pilot test (general directions for teachers, scripted prewriting scenarios, letters to administrators, etc.) assisted in the assessment process.

3. The process of prompt development and holistic scoring was viewed positively by teachers as an important and useful activity in their professional growth.

4. The scoring of 1725 writing samples yielded high levels of inter-rater agreement--coefficients of .96 at grade 3 and .93 at grade 8; inter-rater agreement on one eighth grade prompt reached 100 percent.

5. All writing prompts produced an acceptable range of writing.

6. At the third grade level, Prompt 2 (Possession) emerged as the most effective of the four prompts tested, followed by Prompt 3 (Unusual Day); the least effective was Prompt 4 (Scary Experience).

7. At the eighth grade level, Prompt 8 (Snakes) was most effective of the four prompts tested, followed by Prompt 6 (Possession); the least effective was Prompt 7 (Music).

8. Prewriting at grade 3 had mixed results, probably because students have had little experience with prewriting and/or felt little need to develop a lengthy text after making prewriting notes.

9. An effective prewriting sequence can be administered as part of a 45 minute test period for eighth graders.

10. The two prewriting conditions at grade 8 (Prompt 6, Possession) clearly had a positive impact on student writing when compared to two conditions without prewriting.

11. The average mean for male third graders was 3.32, with a standard deviation of 1.59; for females, the average was 3.84, with a standard deviation of 1.74. At the upper score ranges (score of 6 or above) females showed a higher percentage of achievement (18 percent compared to 8 percent).

12. The average mean for male eighth graders was 3.57, with a standard deviation of 1.49; for females, the average was 4.46, with a standard deviation of 1.59. At the upper score ranges (score of 6 or above) females showed a higher percentage of achievement (25 percent compared to 12 percent).

13. A total of 6.6 percent of grade 3 papers were unscorable; a total of 1.7 percent of grade 8 papers were unscorable.

14. Third graders, at least at the beginning of the year, are not able to handle independent reading of writing tasks.

15. Students who scored highest on the assessment wrote twice as many words as those who scored at the lowest point.

16. Error rates in student writing tend to increase as qualitative scores decrease.

17. Third graders and eighth graders exhibit low rates of error for sentence fragments and subject/verb agreement but higher rates for spelling.

18. Third graders, in general, did not use cursive writing in responding to the writing tasks.

19. For all score points in the assessment, error rates decline in virtually all areas over five years of schooling.

20. The system developed for coding of information, when used in conjunction with VAX programs, yields charts that will be useful in reports to districts.

II. DESIGN

After reviewing writing assessments conducted by other states, (most notably the one in California), and work of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Beaton, 1987), the UWP co-directors decided to test multiple prompts under varying conditions to determine which prompts and which conditions provided the most effective assessment of writing. Participants in the UWP Advanced Summer Institute devised a number of different prompts based on certain standards in the Core Curriculum. At grade 3, four parallel prompts were developed for a single standard (narrative writing). At grade 8, four prompts were developed for four different standards (two related to informative writing, one in narrative writing, and one in persuasive writing).

The grade 8 assessment differed from the grade 3 assessment in that eighth grade classes were given multiple prompts; that is, instead of a class receiving one prompt, it received four; these were distributed on a random basis among students in the class. This was done to ensure that a range of students responded to each prompt and to test the feasibility of conducting such an assessment. With multiple prompts there is less likelihood that teachers and students will "prep" for one kind of writing.

GRADE 3 STANDARD.

In the Core Standards in Language Arts for Grade 3, the "Writing Standard" (4030-07) called for "Students . . . [to] express ideas and experiences in written form." Under this standard were listed the following objectives:

4030-0701	Generate and organize ideas for writing
4030-0702	Write personal experiences, stories, poetry, etc.
4030-0705	Use capital letters and terminal punctuation

Since narrative is a common element in third grade student writing (Graves, 1983; Mosenthal et al., 1983), the decision was made to emphasize narrative along with personal experience. In addition, the following objectives taken from other standards were deemed appropriate for grade 3 writing assessment:

Standard 4030-05: **The students will correctly spell words needed to record ideas and experiences.**

4030-0503	Write words and sentences with correct punctuation and spelling
4030-0504	Spell homonyms and contractions correctly
4030-0506	Show understanding of spelling words by telling what they mean or using them in a sentence

Standard 4030-06: **The students will maintain manuscript skills and learn to write cursive.**

4030-0601	Use correct formation of all upper and lower case letters and numbers in cursive

Grade 3 Test Items.

Although the decision was made to emphasize narrative, the pilot test was designed to assess the effectiveness of more than one prompt. Four prompts were selected for this purpose and appear in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Writing Prompts for Third Grade

Prompt 1

Having Fun at a Favorite Place

Background

Most people have had a fun experience at a favorite place. For you, it might be building a hut in the backyard, playing ball in a neighborhood park, roasting marshmallows at a campground, or riding the roller coaster at Disneyland. Think about what you really like to do at your favorite place.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Then, beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time when you had fun at your favorite place. The reader would like to know what this place is like, so describe it. Tell what you did, how you felt, and why it was fun to you.

Prompt 2

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about when you got your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

Prompt 3

An Unusual Day at School

Background

All of us have had an unusual day at school. For you, it might have been a special part in a school program, a dress-up day, or a substitute teacher. Maybe you won an award or celebrated a holiday. Think about an unusual day at school and what made it a day you still remember.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about an unusual day at school. The reader would like to know what this day was like, so describe it. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you remember this unusual day at school.

Prompt 4

A Scary Experience

Background

Most people have had a scary experience. Maybe they were frightened by a snake, or big dog or even a bee. Maybe they were scared by a bully at school. Maybe they were lost in a mall or frightened by an audience. Think about a scary experience you have had and why you still remember it.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time you were scared. The reader wants to know where you were and what made you feel scared. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you still remember this scary experience.

Conditions.

An effort also was made to determine under what conditions the best writing could be expected to occur. With that in mind, four conditions were identified:

1. Oral reading with teacher-directed prewriting
2. Oral reading without teacher-directed prewriting
3. Silent reading with teacher-directed prewriting
4. Silent reading without teacher-directed prewriting

A mini-pilot test prior to the full field test demonstrated that third graders were not ready to handle Conditions 3 and 4; for the third grade level, therefore, these were deleted and only Conditions 1 and 2 appeared in the full field test for third grade.

The directions for Condition 1 were basically the same for all prompts. Students and teachers were given a prewriting sequence to follow. Students received a sheet on which appeared the prompt, prewriting directions, and space for prewriting. Teachers received explicit directions on how to use the prewriting sequence and were asked to follow these directions as carefully as possible. (See Exhibit 2 for a sample).

Exhibit 2: Student Prewriting Prompt Sheet

3 - 4 - 1

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

___ ___ ___

A _______ B _______ C _______ D _______

A Scary Experience

Background

Most people have had a scary experience. Maybe they were frightened by a snake, or big dog or even a bee. Maybe they were scared by a bully at school. Maybe they were lost in a mall or frightened by an audience. Think about a scary experience you have had and why you still remember it.

1. Write down a place where you were scared.

2. What made this experience scary? Write this down.

3. What words describe this scary experience? List them.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time you were scared. The reader wants to know where you were and what made you feel scared. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you still remember this scary experience.

Oral reading with teacher-directed prewriting

Read "Background" aloud to the class as students follow along. Direct them to do the three prewriting steps that follow the "Background." Invite a few students to share aloud some of their words and ideas from the three steps; acknowledge these ideas positively. Then read "Directions" aloud to the class and tell students to begin their planning and writing. (Total time should be about fifteen minutes.)

GRADE 8.

A review of the Core Standards for Grade 8 reveals, as one might expect, more variety in writing modes and in objectives. In the interest of efficiency and in an effort to retain a sufficient population from which some preliminary findings might be drawn, only four modes of writing were selected: the informative report, persuasive speech, the response to a request for information, and narrative. Each of the modes had corresponding objectives to be measured. Because multiple modes were tested at this grade level, testing was done for three of the four modes only under condition 4--silent reading without teacher direction. One prompt--the narrative--was done under all four conditions (oral/silent reading; with/without prewriting).

THE INFORMATIVE REPORT

The informative report calls for the student to use controlled data from one or more sources to provide an explanation on some subject. The following standards and objectives from the UCCLA address this mode:

Standard 4080-08: Students will compose, . . . in . . . written language, informative reports based on a variety of sources.

Of the ten objectives listed under this standard, the following five were considered applicable to the testing situation:

4080-0801	Select an audience and a manageable topic that will interest the audience
4080-0804	Synthesize information accurately
4080-0805	Use a logical system of organization; that is, either general to specific (deductive) or specific to general (inductive)
4080-0808	Use the entire composing process; that is, prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing
4080-0810	Use vocabulary appropriate to the selected audience
Standard 4080-09:	**Students will produce, through the editing process, a well organized and informative final draft that conforms to standard English.**
4080-0901	Use appropriate sentence structure to convey ideas. Use short and simple sentences for main ideas, longer and more complicated sentence structure for supporting details.
4080-0902	Combine sentences when they share the same subject or verb and do not present major new ideas.
4080-0903	Avoid obvious redundancies
4080-0904	Define unfamiliar or technical vocabulary for the audience.
4080-0905	Begin new paragraphs when the subject matter significantly changes
4080-0906	Use standard spelling

The Prompt and Test Condition. The prompt for the informative report uses what is called "controlled data" as a basis for the writing. Such a prompt provided students with information that they used to develop a written response. The situation was a school assembly on snakes which was to be reported on in the school newspaper. See Exhibit 3 for the prompt. The prompt was tested under only Condition 4--silent reading without prewriting direction.

Exhibit 3: Grade 8 Writing Prompt for Report Writing

Writing Situation

John Burton, an expert on snakes, presented an assembly in your school auditorium. He brought with him a live rattlesnake, an Indian python, and a king cobra. You are on the newspaper staff at your school and have been asked to write a news story about the assembly.

Writing Directions

Write a news story about the assembly for your school newspaper. Assume you have taken the following notes. Select the information that you can use to write an effective news story. Remember that the first paragraph of a news story contains the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why.) Organize your remaining information so that it is interesting and easy for your readers to understand.

YOUR NOTES

Diamond Rattlesnake
named Elvis
has long hollow fangs
is most dangerous rattler in U.S.
rests with body coiled
has hollow teeth like hypodermic needles
raises upper third of body into S-shape when angry
stabs prey
warns of danger with rattle
swallows food whole
lives in U.S.
strikes full length of S-shape
gives birth to live babies

King Cobra
named Tinkerbell
is 3 ft. snake from India
strikes slowly
attacks without being angered
is hooded
bites and chews with short fangs as venom runs into wound
has deadly bite with no antidote
was shedding and was irritable and nervous
doesn't move to snake charmers' music.
Sways to charmers' movement
king cobra kills 25,000 Indian people per year
large king cobras have enough venom to kill hundreds of people

Python
named Crackin
8 ft. from India
held by 14 members of audience
lays eggs
is sluggish, lazy
is found near water
is not poisonous
kills by constricting
large pythons kill goats, pigs, and deer
python in Malaysia ate a 14 year old boy

PERSUASION

Because the Core calls for both oral and written skills in persuasion and the standards address both, it was necessary to eliminate the oral skills and focus only on the written objectives under the appropriate standards. These appear below:

Standard 4080-11:	**Students will clearly reflect and support their ideas in persuasive papers . . . .**
4080-1101	Choose an issue about which the student has strong feelings and is willing to become knowledgeable
4080-1102	Select an audience and determine what they will likely think about the chosen issue
4080-1103	State the opinion clearly
4080-1104	Support the opinion with examples, facts, or other evidence
4080-1105	Use the entire composing process; that is, prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing
4080-1107	Use words that persuade most effectively
Standard 4080-12:	**The students will produce, through the editing process, persuasive final products that conform to standard English.**
4080-1201	Begin a new paragraph each time there is a significant shift in the reasons for the opinion or the support for one of the reasons
4080-1202	Make sure subjects and verbs agree in number . . .
4080-1203	Use standard spelling

The Prompt and Test Condition. The prompt was written to create a context in which written skills might prepare the student for oral speaking on a controversial topic. The prompt was tested under only Condition 4--silent reading without prewriting direction. See Exhibit 4 for the prompt.

Exhibit 4: Grade 8 Writing Prompt for Persuasion

Writing Situation

Parents and students at your school are divided in their opinions about the effect of rock music on students. Some want to eliminate all rock music on radio stations and at school dances. Others don't view rock music as a problem.

Because the issue is one that has caused great interest among people in your community, the local radio station has scheduled a public meeting where people can speak about this issue.

Writing Directions:

Decide which side of this issue you favor. Write a speech designed to persuade others to agree with you. Your speech should include personal experience and/or other evidence to support your position. Your audience will consist of both parents and other students.

INFORMATIVE RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Although the Core Curriculum standard for informative responses also covers requests for information, only the informative response was used. Those objectives which addressed the response were as follows:

Standard 4080-14: **Student will compose . . . informative responses to requests.**

4080-1407	Identify who wrote the request and why
4080-1408	Respond clearly to the request
4080-1409	Use the appropriate letter format
4080-1410	Use the entire composing process; prewriting, drafting, revising and editing
4080-1411	Use vocabulary appropriate for the intended audience.

Standard 4080-15: **Students will produce, through the editing process, final drafts of . . . an informative response that conforms to standard English.**

4080-1501	Define unfamiliar terms, using appositives wherever possible
4080-1502	Punctuate appositives correctly
4080-1504	Begin a new paragraph each time the information in the explanation significantly changes
4080-1505	Use specific nouns and active verbs
4080-1506	Avoid fragments and run-on sentences
4080-1507	Use sentence variety to improve readability
4080-1508	Use standard spelling

The Prompt and Test Condition. The prompt was selected to elicit as much detail as possible as well as a sense of voice in the writer's response.

Rather than write a formal business response, students were invited to respond to a peer's request for information. The prompt was tested only under Condition 4--silent reading without prewriting direction. See Exhibit 5 for prompt.

Exhibit 5: Grade 8 Writing Prompt for Response to Request for Information

Writing Situation

Assume that your principal has received the following letter with a note asking that it be passed on to an eighth grader for a response. The letter has now been given to you.

Dear Eighth Grader,

I will be moving to your area and will be in the eighth grade at your school next year. Please write me a letter telling me about your school.

I would especially like to know about teachers, classes, activities, and anything else that will help me fit in to the school.

Write soon.

Sincerely,

Kelly Green

Writing Directions:

Write a letter to Kelly that tells about your school. Use your own mailing address for the return address so that if Kelly wants to write for more information, you will receive the letter. The principal has Kelly's address and will see that your letter is sent. Since Kelly has never visited your school, provide as much helpful information in your letter as you can. Be certain to include the information Kelly has requested. Write only on one side of the page.

NARRATIVE

Core standards address narrative writing at the third grade and eighth grade levels. While standards differ slightly, focusing on observed experience at the eighth grade rather than direct personal experience, many of the objectives under the eighth grade narrative standards are similar to those at the third grade. Hence, an effort was made to test at the eighth grade level one of the narrative prompts used at the third grade level. The eighth grade objectives to be measured were as follows:

Standard 4080-05: **Students will compose narratives of observed experience with an implied simple theme.**

4080-0501	Select an audience and an interesting topic
4080-0502	Develop a logical story line (plot)
4080-0503	Develop characters by showing specific details of appearance, action, and speech
4080-0504	Use the entire composing process; that is, prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing
4080-0505	Use precise vocabulary to create the desired dominant impression and to relate an important theme

Standard 4080-06: **Students will produce, through the editing process, final drafts of observed experience that conform to standard English.**

4080-0601	Use clear and specific language that reveals the character and situation
4080-0602	Use adjectives and adverbs correctly . . .
4080-0603	Make subjects and verbs agree in number

4080-0604	Create and correctly punctuate more sophisticated sentence structure
4080-0605	Avoid fragments and run-on sentences
4080-0607	Begin new paragraphs each time the action, setting, idea, or speaker changes
4080-0608	Use standard spelling

The Prompt and Test Conditions: Prompt 2 (See Exhibit 6) from the third grade assessment was selected for this comparison; the features of the prompt, although concentrating on an object rather than people, fit most of the elements called for in the observed experience narrative of the eighth grade. The prompt was tested under four conditions. (See Appendix C for explanations of each of the conditions).

1. Oral reading with teacher-directed prewriting
2. Oral reading without teacher-directed prewriting
3. Silent reading with teacher-directed prewriting
4. Silent reading without teacher-directed prewriting

Exhibit 6: Writing Prompt for Narrative at Grades 3 and 8.

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about when you got your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND HANDLING

Field Contact

UWP initiated contact with school and district personnel in early September of 1987 to alert them to the pilot assessment and to provide information on the local phases of the assessment. Sixteen districts and thirty-two schools were selected for the pilot sample.

Superintendents of sampled districts received a letter outlining the schedule of events and inviting participation; specific schools were named that had been targeted for assessment. (See Appendix D for sample letter).

Principals of the selected schools received a letter requesting their cooperation, describing the responsibilities, and asking them to identify two classes to be used for the testing. Principals were asked to respond with the number of students in each class that would be tested. In an effort to minimize disruption of school schedules, principals were given a small "window" of two or three days in which to carry out the assessment. (See Appendix E for sample letter).

The UWP staff made every effort to describe in detail the purpose of the assessment and the responsibilities of principals and teachers who were involved. Throughout the contact period, UWP encouraged school personnel to call with any questions or concerns relative to the assessment. Teachers who administered the test were asked to fill out a survey to provide information on any unusual problems encountered in the testing. (See Appendix for D survey).

Test Administration

Test packets with instructions were mailed first class to each school at least a week in advance of the test date. Principals were asked to provide the teachers who would be administering the test with background information (See Appendix C) but were to retain the actual writing prompts until the test dates. Testing took place on October 1-2, 1987 in all but three schools; at these locations, testing occurred within a week of the scheduled date.

Regular classroom teachers conducted the test session. Principals were asked to visit the testing sessions and to make notes on any problems or concerns which surfaced. Students had approximately 45 minutes for the writing; in those instances where prewriting occurred, the prewriting activity was included in the 45 minutes. More than 1700 students enrolled in 32 schools took the tests. A breakdown of the test population appears in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 **Summary of Frequencies**

Total Test Population: 1725

number of 3rd graders tested: 863

number of 8th graders tested: 862

number of males tested at third grade level: 461

number of females tested at third grade level: 400

number of males tested at eighth grade level: 373

number of females tested at eighth grade level: 488

Coding, Scoring, and Data Processing

All cover sheets for each writing sample were subjected to an in-house edit by UWP staff, including (1) a check on the coding of student, gender, district, and school identification information; (2) an edit for stray marks on the cover sheet; (3) a totaling of the holistic scores on each cover sheet.

Written responses received holistic scores--see discussion of scoring procedures--which were totaled on each writing sample's cover sheet. These scores were then keypunched, verified, and listed on a data tape which was then converted to diskette as well as to a VAX account.

The data tape contained one record for each student completing the writing prompt. This record included (1) a numerical identification code which permitted the rematching of each student record to its original test document should that prove necessary; (2) gender code; (3) district code; (4) school code; (5) grade level code; (6) prompt code; (7) condition code; (8) holistic score code; (9) third reading code.

Prior to data processing, the data tape was scanned for invalid entries and updated where appropriate. All response data on the data tape were entered in raw-score form and converted to the percentage form as needed.

Reports generated from the data included the following:

1. Performance by all third grade students
2. Performance by third grade students on each prompt according to condition
3. Performance by gender of third grade student on each prompt and condition
4. Performance by all eighth grade students
5. Performance by eighth grade students on each prompt according to condition
6. Performance by gender of eighth grade student on each prompt and condition
7. Number of third readings by prompt and condition at each grade level

The Mechanics of Test Administration and Scoring

The mechanics of developing and administering the pilot test for writing assessment required that UWP deal with coding, teacher direction, and holistic scoring, which are described as follows:

Coding.

One of the initial tasks faced by the UWP staff was determining how to code the prompts to protect the anonymity of the students and schools involved. There was also the need to streamline the process so that valuable time would not be lost during the actual testing situation. The decision was made to pre-code all the writing prompt sheets so that prompt number, condition and grade level would not have to be entered by students. Therefore, in the upper right hand corner of each prompt sheet were placed three digits; for example, 3-4-1 would indicate third grade, prompt 4, condition 1. This coding proved invaluable when it came time to send the prompts out to the schools, since sorting the sheets would have been time-consuming without this prior identification. It also proved helpful when sorting the papers for holistic scoring sessions.

In addition to the coding of the prompt, condition, and grade level, identification of each student, the student's gender, the district, and the school were needed. These were to be filled in by the student according to teacher direction. To avoid duplication of student identification numbers, teachers were instructed to have students use the last four digits of their telephone numbers. Although apparently some third graders did not know their telephone numbers, this practice worked fairly well. The coding for gender was done by using "1" for males and "2" for females. Again, in some instances, students apparently got confused and put M or F in the gender slot; however, this was not a major fact--. District and school codes were supplied to the teachers administering the tests and students placed those in the appropriate slots on the prompt sheet. A typical entry, then, would look like the following: 0420 2 15 30.

The only complication arose at the third grade level where some teachers reported that coding the prompt sheet took students much longer than anticipated, and it was suggested that perhaps some pre-coding, at least at that grade level, ought to be done prior to the testing session (See Appendix K for sample of coding).

Teacher Directions.

Efforts were made to provide teachers with as much information as possible. All test materials were delivered to the test site at least a week in advance, and teachers were notified by their principals that the materials had arrived. Included with the actual tests were suggestions to the teachers about how to prepare students for the testing in advance in order to minimize test anxiety; teachers were asked to develop a master list of student identification numbers so that if a student forgot his or her ID number the day of the test, the number could be supplied quickly.

For the test itself, the administration directions were quite specific and followed a step-by-step procedure which, based on feedback from classroom teachers, seemed to minimize the confusion and provided a useful reference when questions arose. The UWP received very few telephone calls concerning test procedures although teachers were encouraged to call if questions arose. (See Appendix F for a summary of comments by teachers about the test and test procedures).

Holistic Scoring Sessions.

Once the writing samples had been completed, the UWP staff was faced with scoring the 1725 papers. Originally the staff had anticipated using 20 classroom teachers from both elementary and secondary levels to score the papers in two consecutive six hour scoring sessions. Because of scheduling conflicts, the number of scorers in the original sessions was reduced to 14 and the scoring time shrank to 10 hours instead of the original 12. Subsequent scoring sessions were held on three other occasions and ranged from an hour and half to two hours and involved anywhere from 6 to 25 teachers at a session.

Prior to the scoring sessions, papers were sorted by prompt; no attempt was made to sort by condition; however, sets of papers from districts were broken up to provide a more random distribution of students for scoring purposes.

Scoring sessions themselves were carefully structured. It is most important that a careful screening of papers be done prior to any scoring so that sets of sample papers representing the different score categories be identified. Myers (1980) and White (1987) offer useful guidelines for conducting effective scoring sessions. In the large scale scoring sessions, approximately an hour and a half was used to go through the sample sets of papers and achieve consensus on rankings; third grade papers, because of their brevity, could be scored more rapidly than eighth grade papers. It must be remembered, however, that each paper must be read by two readers so this factor must be figured into the time allotment. (See Appendix G for sample instructions to scorers).

IV. SCORING OF WRITING SAMPLES

Description of the scoring method.

Each of the four writing samples at each grade level was scored using the holistic scoring method. Holistic scoring is an impressionistic scoring process that allows ranking of writing samples on the basis of their overall quality. In the process, scorers are trained to understand general features of writing that determine levels of achievement on an ordinal scale. The major assumption of holistic scoring is that writing quality should be judged on its whole presentation, rather than individual qualities. Therefore, the "whole" of a piece of writing is assumed to be greater than the sum of its parts.

Large scale writing assessments (see Myers, 1980; McCaig, 1981; White, 1985; Breland, 1987) have adopted holistic scoring. With training, teachers recognize and agree upon common elements of effective writing and can rank pieces of writing with a high degree of agreement. Duke (1985) and Mellon (1975) report inter-rater reliability correlations as high as .70 to .80 when the holistic approach is used correctly.

The holistic scoring procedure.

Before any scoring of writing samples occurs, scoring criteria are established for each writing prompt in the form of a rubric. Initial scoring rubrics were developed by the UWP summer institute participants after reading a sampling of papers written to several of the prompts. These scoring rubrics were further refined by UWP staff based on a sampling of papers taken from the actual assessment. For each prompt, a set of "range finders" was identified. Range-finders are papers which represent a range of achievement demonstrated by a total set of papers. Each range-finder is assigned a score from 1 to 4, with 1 representing a weak paper and 4 representing a superior paper. The 1-4 scoring range is commonly used (Myers, 1980) to avoid having papers "dumped" in a middle rating.

Training sessions for readers are held prior to actual scoring. Readers are asked to read a set of papers and assign each one a score from 1 to 4; readers then are asked to identify their rankings of each paper and these rankings are charted so that everyone can see the distribution; head readers then lead a discussion of rankings, seeking clarification, checking the scoring rubric against the rankings, etc. Usually a second reading is done with another set of papers and the charting process is repeated. If readers are achieving consensus on their rankings, the actual scoring can begin. If there is still a wide range in the rankings, further discussion and reading of papers may have to occur. Such training sessions take between one to two hours for each prompt used. For a specific formula for calculating the time involved in scoring papers holistically, see Myers (1980).

During actual scoring sessions, each of two readers scores a piece of writing by reading it through relatively quickly and assigning it a number from 1 to 4. (See Appendix G for scoring directions). The score received by the writer on a writing sample is the sum of the scores of the two readers; scores, therefore, can range from 2 (weakest) to 8 (strongest).

The holistic method guarantees that the two scores assigned a particular writing sample will not differ by more than one point. In cases where two readers differ substantially, such as a 2 and a 4, the chief reader does a third reading and either agrees with one or the other of the readers or assigns a value between the two scores which then is doubled to produce the final score.

The process of adding the scores of two readers expands the scoring scale to provide for "borderline" cases. A paper which receives 3 from both scorers (for a total of 6) is likely to be stronger than a paper which receives a 2 and a 3 (for a total of 5). Likewise, a paper that receives a 4 and a 3 (for a total of 7) will be stronger than a 6 paper.

Holistic readings done in the prescribed manner extend beyond an individual assessment. Such sessions help classroom practitioners become aware of the testing purposes and the handling of student work. These teachers return to their classrooms with a renewed sense of the validity of using actual writing as a reliable test of writing ability and a better understanding of how this reliability can be achieved.

V. RESULTS OF THE WRITING ASSESSMENT

Interpreting the scores.

Scoring rubrics are provided for each of the writing prompts. Since the writing prompts for the third grade were all narrative, one rubric was used to score all of the third grade samples. For the eighth grade, however, a different scoring rubric for each prompt was necessary, since each prompt called for a different kind of writing and had different objectives keyed to it.

Rubrics provide "descriptors" that can be associated with papers in each scoring category. Although the descriptors identify characteristics common to papers with a particular score, not all papers in a given category will necessarily contain all of the characteristics associated with that category.

Papers which merely copy the assignment over, provide insufficient writing to be judged, miss the topic entirely, are illegible, or give no response are given a 0. A score of 0, however, is not to be viewed as worse than a 2. The 0 indicates merely that a paper was not scorable and therefore no assessment could be made of the student's writing skills. Both readers must decide that a paper deserves a 0. Otherwise, a third reading is necessary.

Examples of actual student papers which helped to define each of the four scoring categories should be read in order to understand the results which follow. In reading the papers and looking at the results, readers should keep in mind that all writing was done in first draft form and that no specific time was set aside for revising or proofreading. Essays have been reproduced exactly as received; specific names of individuals and schools are removed to preserve the anonymity of students and test sites.

Grade Three Results

Eight hundred sixty-three (863) third graders provided the population for the third grade assessment. The third graders were asked to respond to four different prompts, all of which asked for the responses in narrative form. (Readers may wish to review the third grade prompts that appear in Section II of this report). Students were tested under one of two conditions: oral teacher direction with prewriting (Condition 1) or oral teacher direction without prewriting (Condition 2).

Because all of the prompts called for narrative responses, only one scoring rubric was devised; the rubric was arranged to address all of the common elements identified in each of the prompts. Students had approximately 45 minutes in which to complete any prewriting and a draft of their response to the writing prompt. The total number of writings by prompt and condition, with means and standard deviations for each scoring, appears in Table 2.

On the following pages appear sample papers for each prompt used at the third grade level. Each paper represents a scoring category on the rubric for a particular prompt. Since the same rubric was used for all four prompts at this level, it appears first, followed by the representative papers and brief discussions of the results for each prompt. It should be noted that these papers are representative; they reflect a possible level of achievement at each score point; within each score category, of course, there is always some variability. The ratings which appear in the various tables throughout this section are based on the sum of two readers' scores; hence a score of 2 in the table represents two scores of 1 and 1; this pattern holds true throughout the ratings summaries, providing a scale of 0, meaning unscorable, to a maximum of 8.

TABLE 2 **Total Number of 3rd Grade Writings by Prompt and Condition**

Prompt Title	1 Condition	2	Total
	Oral w/ Prewriting	Oral w/o Prewriting	
Place (1)	116 Count 3.54 Mean 1.44 Std. Dev.	112 Count 3.63 Mean 1.75 Std. Dev.	228 Count 3.58 Mean 1.65 Std. Dev.
Possession (2)	112 Count 3.85 Mean 1.56 Std. Dev.	123 Count 3.74 Mean 1.65 Std. Dev.	235 Count 3.80 Mean 1.60 Std. Dev.
Day (3)	99 Count 3.09 Mean 1.53 Std. Dev.	103 Count 4.14 Mean 2.12 Std. Dev.	202 Count 3.62 Mean 1.95 Std. Dev.
Scary (4)	99 Count 3.53 Mean 1.60 Std. Dev.	99 Count 3.10 Mean 1.80 Std. Dev.	198 Count 3.31 Mean 1.76 Std. Dev.
Totals	426 Count 3.52 Mean 1.50 Std. Dev.	437 Count 3.67 Mean 1.86 Std. Dev.	863 Count 3.59 Mean 1.74 Std. Dev.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE PROMPT 1-4

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

	4	3	2	1
CONTEXT	Provides rich descriptive background of objects, places or people for experience	Provides descriptive background of objects, places, or people	Name objects, places or people with little elaboration; or overemphasizes context, drawing attention away from incident	Lists or names objects with no description
INCIDENT	Narrates vivid account of personal involvement in an experience ("shows story")	Narrates personal involvement in experience ("tells story")	Lists action with some narration of personal experience	Has little or no development of action or personal experience
SIGNIFICANCE	Strongly emphasizes why experience was important	Implies or states why experience was important	Gives little indication why experience was important	Gives little or no indication of why experience was important
COHERENCE	Displays well-developed narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or has thematic unity	Displays narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or has thematic unity	Displays limited narrative structure (particularly with middle or end); or has little thematic unity	Displays little or no development of narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or lacks thematic unity
CONVENTIONS	Has strong control over mechanics	May have errors; these do not interfere with communication	Has errors that may interfere with communication	Has errors that interfere with communication

Sample Response to Prompt 1: "Having Fun at a Favorite Place"

Score: 1

I like logoon becose it is fun and it has fun rides and it is scery and has fun rides and it is exciting.

Score: 2

Once me and my family went to Disneyland. I like to ride the Materhorne, Thudur mountain, Dumbo, Space mountain and the submarine ride. Evrey morning we would ride the moirail to a resterunt in Disneyland and have Mickey Mouse pancakes and sometimes we would have beljun wafles and then we would go have diner at a restrunt or sometimes we would have diner at are hotel. After three days we would pack are stuff and drive about half an hour to another hotel and we would unpack are stuff and we would go the beach for four days and then we would pack up and go home.

Score: 3

I like lagoon very much it has rides for every age espeshaly mine. I like going on tidale wave, colosus, screamer, the roller coaster, mousetrap and the logride. I dont like the new flying carpet any more because the first time I went on it wen I was on my way to our truck and I felt sick one minuter latter I stoped and waited for my dad to open the back of or truck I had to lay down in the back of the truk. When I got home I was asleep so my mom and dad had to wake me up when I got in the house I got in my pjs and brused my teeth and went to bed. the next morning as soon as I could play I ran to my friends and told them abot lagoon. the next day I went to lagoon again.

Score: 4

Going to Pergatory is so much fun! There is a white slide and you go down it with sleds! I like the slide the best. Their Barb-que lunches are terriffic! They have steak, macaroni and mashed potatoes and soda. And for minature golf they have these objects and you have to smack them in there and the balls go out the other side! Their tennis they have heart shaped balls and net. And once I won a game against my dad! Their swimming pools are all on top of the motel! All of them! And their are 2 swimming pools and 3 hot tubs. And the inside of the motels are beautiful! And all of the beds are king size beds! It is the best place I've been to!

Summary of Results for Prompt 1

Prompt 1 invited students to identify a favorite place where they had fun. One of the key elements in this prompt was to determine if students could focus their writing on a particular time at this favorite place and describe it in such a way that readers would know why the student considered the place special and what the fun was that the student had there. No particular audience was specified, and no other format was suggested other than that of a "story" approach. Students, therefore, were drawing exclusively on personal experience to supply the information necessary in the response.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. Two hundred twenty-eight (228) students responded to Prompt 1, which was tested under Condition 1 and 2. The mean for the responses was 3.58 with a standard deviation of 1.65. About 54 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 11 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above while 1.8 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. Table 3 below provides summaries of the percentages and frequencies at each score point.

TABLE 3 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	13	5.7	5.7
2	50	21.9	27.6
3	40	17.5	45.2
4	68	29.8	75.0
5	32	14.0	89.0
6	15	6.6	95.6
7	6	2.6	98.2
8	4	1.8	100.0
TOTAL	228	100.0	

Test Conditions. Of the 228 students responding to Prompt 1, 116 responded with oral teacher direction and prewriting; 112 responded to the prompt with oral teacher direction but no prewriting. A comparison of Tables 4 and 5 suggests that there was no major difference between students who did prewriting and those who did not. Slightly more unscorable responses were found under Condition 2 (8.9 percent), than for those writing under Condition 1, (2.6 percent).

TABLE 4 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 1 COND: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	3	2.6	2.6
2	30	25.9	28.4
3	23	19.8	48.3
4	37	31.9	80.2
5	11	9.5	89.7
6	8	6.9	96.6
7	3	2.6	99.1
8	1	.9	100.0
	116	100.0	

TABLE 5 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 1 COND: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	10	8.9	8.9
2	20	17.9	26.8
3	17	15.2	42.0
4	31	27.7	69.6
5	21	18.8	88.4
6	7	6.3	94.6
7	3	2.7	97.3
8	3	2.7	100.0
	112	100.0	

Sample Response to Prompt 2: "How I Got My Favorite Possession"

Score: 1

I got my model three weeks ago it is green and it has lots of other colers and the hachet opens and it has lots of misels. when I got it it took four days to put it to gether. I was happy when I got it. It is importent to me becuse it belongs to me.

Score: 2

My bike is speshel to me because I can go lots of places on it. I don't have to use all my energie to go some were. And its all so fun to ride around. I all so like to my freinds house. It is all so fun to go off jumps on my bike. I got my bike for Christmas I was so happy when I got it. It was a year when it didn't snow so I went outside with my dad and rode it around. I have fun riding it around the naboorhood. Sometimes my seet falls off when I come to school. But I don't care I just put it back on. I have fun riding it around.

Score: 3

One of my favorite possesion is a china doll. I got it when I turned 8 it was a present from the Lion House. It looked like a pioneer it has a bonnet on and a long dress and it has pretty hair and small white socks it has black shoes and flowers on the dress and bonnett. Whenever I think about it I take it off the shelf and I hug it. One time it almost broke, I took it and hugged it and then started to cry. By that experience I know it is my most valuable possesion.

Score: 4

On February 11, 1987 was my birthday. After I had dinner and when I was eating my cake I opened my presents. One of the presents was wrapted in nice wrapping paper. Under the box was a beautiful doll. She was a My Mother Pet kind. I wanted one so bad! See Diane my sister has one called Lisa. But now I have one called Cami! She was so beautiful she looks just like Lisa but a little bit different. She has dark ebony hair and beautiful brown eyes and a light blue dress and bonnet. My mom gave her to me but I have to be careful with her because she's expensive. But I love her very much!

Summary of Results for Prompt 2

Prompt 2 asked students to identify a special possession and to both describe it and provide a narrative of the occasion when they received the object. This task asked for some complexity in writing because of the emphasis on both description and narrative; the purpose of the task was to determine if the student could integrate the description into the narrative. No particular audience was specified, and no format other than the emphasis on story was provided. Students, again, drew on personal experience to supply the necessary information.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. Two hundred thirty-five (235) students responded to Prompt 2, which was tested under Condition 1 and 2. The mean for the responses was 3.80, with a standard deviation of 1.60. About 55 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 13 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 1.7 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. Table 6 below provides summaries of the percentages and frequencies at each score point.

TABLE 6 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	6	2.6	2.6
2	48	20.4	23.0
3	50	21.3	44.3
4	57	24.3	68.5
5	43	18.3	86.8
6	16	6.8	93.6
7	11	4.7	98.3
8	4	1.7	100.0
	235	100.0	

Test conditions. Of the 235 students responding to Prompt 2, 112 responded with oral teacher direction and prewriting; 123 responded with oral teacher direction but no prewriting. A comparison of Tables 7 and 8 suggests that there was no major difference between students who did prewriting and those who did not. The number of unscorable responses was identical. Tables 7 and 8 provide a summary of the percentages of responses at each score level as well as the frequency counts for each condition.

TABLE 7 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 2 COND: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	3	2.7	2.7
2	21	18.8	21.4
3	22	19.6	41.1
4	28	25.0	66.1
5	24	21.4	87.5
6	8	7.1	94.6
7	5	4.5	99.1
8	1	.9	100.0
TOTAL	112	100.0	

TABLE 8 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 2 COND: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	3	2.4	2.4
2	27	22.0	24.4
3	28	22.8	47.2
4	29	23.6	70.7
5	19	15.4	86.2
6	8	6.5	92.7
7	6	4.9	97.6
8	3	2.4	100.0
TOTAL	123	100.0	

Sample Responses to Prompt 3: An Unusual Day at School

Score: 1

I like school it is fun for me and boys and girl.
All of the boy and girl have fun at school.
I like readding at P--school it is fun readding.
I like readding it is fun to read at school.
I like to go to school at 7:00 it is fun.
I like to paly games at school it is fun for me.
All of the big boy like to paly with me to.
I like to paly with a boy and two boy to.
I like to paly with my frends it is fun.
A lot of frends cum to paly with me.

Score: 2

The first day of scool was very scairy their was diffent people and the room was very diffent. So we got uos to the class room. So now it was time to go home. So some people were very poshe so the firs day so that's what happen Somebody ran very fast a I fell on the grass. And mom was watting for out in the car. and my pains had dust on eim so she said let's go home and wash them so we did. and then she said that was not dust it was dirt. So I said well can I go to bed now so that night my mom whent to the stor and got me a ice cream so she for got I was in bed. So she came and so she came down stairs and woek me up and I said go away I'am triing to sleep. so I got up and ate the ice cream.

Score: 3

Mu unushul da of school was September 1, 1987. It was the first day of school. I was fritened of my new class because I had never been in therd grad befor. I am use to my calss now becuse I have been in therd grade long enuff that I know evrybody in my class. I'd like to tell you about the firt day of school. Well it all hapend like this. I was on my way to school with my firend Amanda. And when I got to school. It was ok untill I got to my class. It got real scary becuse I had a new techer. And their were alot of new chilren in my class. That's why I was fritened. Anyways I got my desk. And then she gave us suplys that we would nead. My farrit part whas when we got to know our techers name. Her name was Mrs. R. _____ . She is pritty she has brown hair. And she smiles all the time. Evrytime the hole class is quit she is so nice. she even puts marbels in the jar. Then we played games and got to know evrybody in the class. And by the time school got out I thote it was the best thing that ever happend to me. While I was walking home thot about achool that day. When I got home I told my mother about my first day of school. And I have loved school. I like Mrs. R ____ most of all.

Score: 4

Let me tell you about my unusual day at school. O.K. thank you. My unsual day at school is in 2nd grade. I was eating lunch one day and my tooth came out. I was suripesed that it came out, I almost swallowed it. When it came out and I put my tounge in the emptey spot it felt wierd. I took my tray and cleared it and went to my teacher. She tolled me to rince it out with water, and I did. And did I tell you I betted my mother

1 doller and I had to pay her. I thot it would come out after Stant Patricks day. But I was wrong. And she was right. And I did not show her tell we got home. She looked spriesed. And I whented to give her the doller and SHE WOULD NOT TAKE IT! She said I would have to work it off. AND I HATED TO DO WORK! THE END.

Summary of Results for Prompt 3

Prompt 3 required students to identify an unusual day at school; students were encouraged to focus on specific events rather than chronicling an entire day. The objective of the task was to determine whether students could identify specific elements or events in a day and focus a narrative on those. no specific audience was identified. Students obviously were forced to draw upon their personal experiences to satisfy the writing task.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. Two hundred and two (202) students responded to Prompt 3, which was tested under Conditions 1 and 2. The mean for the responses was 3.62, with a standard deviation of 1.95. Approximately 63 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 14 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 4 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. Table 9 provides summaries of the percentages and frequencies at each score point.

TABLE 9 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 3 HOLISTIC SCORES

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	18	8.9	8.9
2	43	21.3	30.2
3	33	16.3	46.5
4	49	24.3	70.8
5	30	14.9	85.6
6	10	5.0	90.6
7	11	5.4	96.0
8	8	4.0	100.0
TOTALS	202	100.0	

Test Conditions. Of the 202 students responding to Prompt 3, 99 responded with oral teacher direction and prewriting; 103 responded with oral teacher direction but no prewriting. A comparison of Tables 10 and 11 suggests that there were differences at almost every score point between students who did prewriting and those who did not. All score points except one for students who did not do prewriting show a higher frequency count. The number of unscorable responses under Condition 2 was only slightly higher than that for Condition 1.

TABLE 10 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 3 COND: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	8	8.1	8.1
2	29	29.3	37.4
3	22	22.2	59.6
4	24	24.2	83.8
5	11	11.1	94.9
6	4	4.0	99.0
7	1	1.0	100.0
TOTAL	99	100.0	

TABLE 11 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 3 COND: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	10	9.7	9.7
2	12	13.6	23.3
3	11	10.7	34.0
4	25	24.3	58.3
5	19	18.4	76.7
6	6	5.8	82.5
7	10	9.7	92.2
8	8	7.8	100.0
TOTAL	103	100.0	

Sample Responses to Prompt 4: "A Scary Experience"

Score: 1

In a store I got lost. I thought I was going to get kidnaped. I looked all over the store. And then I found her. I was so scared I souldn't find her. I cryed and cryed. I was so glad I found her.

Score: 2

One day we wen't to the mall. I son'ted to look at the shoes and we did, then my mom, dad left I didn't no.

I was still looking at the shoes then I stoped looking and I saw that my mom, dad wher gon I started to look for them for a long time untill I fowned them and I was happy. The End.

Score: 3

Once I was trick or treating and we wnet to 20 houses and one persen said that people were in a truck throwing punkins at people. Then I heard a couple of min. later someone crying someone hit him in the leg with a pumkion. Then the next day I found out my brothers friend got hit in the head his name is Mat P--. Him and Dany my brother was trick or treating when this happend.

The reasen this is scary to me is I thout I woud get hit. The end.

Score: 4

One day afrer school when school was over and everybody was gone and this bully came up to me. He said to me. "Do you want to fight." I said "no." Then his friends came along. Then his friend said to me, "If you don't fight him I will bring my dog named "killer. boy was I scared. When they where talking I just run home. But they almost coult me. Boy was I lucky and I told my mom and dad. The next day bully got in trouble by the preisabol. I was happy that day. That day it was just fine.

Summary of Results for Prompt 4

Prompt 4 asked students to identify a scary experience; the emphasis was placed on describing the experience within a narrative framework and keeping a focus on a particular event rather than a series. Students had to draw upon their personal experience for this prompt and were not given any format other than the narrative clue. No particular audience was specified.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. One hundred ninety-eight (198) students responded to Prompt 4 which was tested under both Condition 1 and 2. The mean for the responses was 3.31, with a standard deviation of 1.76. About 48 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 13 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while .5 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. Table 12 below provides summaries of the percentages and frequencies at each score point.

TABLE 12 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 4 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	20	10.1	10.1
2	49	24.7	34.8
3	34	17.2	52.0
4	51	25.8	77.8
5	18	9.1	86.9
6	21	10.6	97.5
7	4	2.0	99.5
8	1	.5	100.0
TOTAL	198	100.0	

Test Conditions. Of the 109 students responding to Prompt 4, 99 responded with oral teacher direction and prewriting; 99 responded with oral teacher direction but no prewriting. A comparison of Tables 13 and 14 suggests that there were some differences at almost every score point between students who did prewriting and those who did not, but no overall consistent pattern appears. The number of unscorable responses under Condition 2 was over 50 percent higher than for Condition 1.

TABLE 13 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 4 COND: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	6	6.1	6.1
2	26	26.3	32.3
3	13	13.1	45.5
4	29	29.3	74.7
5	10	10.1	84.8
6	13	13.1	98.0
7	2	2.0	100.0
TOTAL	99	100.0	

TABLE 14 GRADE: 3 PROMPT: 4 COND: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	14	14.1	14.1
2	23	23.2	37.4
3	21	21.2	58.6
4	22	22.2	80.8
5	8	8.1	88.9
6	8	8.1	97.0
7	2	2.0	99.0
8	1	1.0	100.0
TOTAL	99	100.0	

Grade 8 Results

Eight hundred and sixty-two (862) eighth graders provided the population for the eighth grade assessment. Unlike the third graders, the eighth graders wrote in four different modes: response to a request for information, narrative, persuasive speech, and informative report. Because students were responding in different forms and for different purposes, separate scoring rubrics had to be developed for each of the four prompts.

In addition, the eighth graders wrote under different conditions than did the third graders; with all prompts but one, the eighth graders wrote under Condition 4--silent reading of prompt without teacher direction or prewriting. Prompt 6, which was identical to Prompt 2 for the third graders, was tested under all four conditions. However, in all cases, students had the same amount of time for writing--45 minutes--and the writing samples were first drafts. The total number of writings by prompt and condition along with the mean for each prompt appears in Table 15.

On the following pages appear sample papers for each prompt used at the eighth grade level. Each paper represents a scoring category on the rubric for a particular prompt. (Readers may wish to refer to Section II of this report to review the eighth grade writing prompts.) The rubric for a particular prompt appears first, followed by the representative papers; they reflect a possible level of achievement at each score point. Within each score category, of course, there is always some variability. A brief summary of the results for the writing of each prompt appears after the sample papers.

TABLE 15: Total Number of 8th Grade Writings by Prompt and Condition

Prompt Title	Condition				Total
	1	2	3	4	
	Oral w/ Prewrite	Oral w/o Prewrite	Silent w/ Prewrite	Silent w/o Prewrite	
Letter (5)				160 Count 3.78 Mean 1.58 Std. Dev.	160 3.78
Possession (6)	114 Count 4.27 Mean 1.72 Std. Dev.	70 Count 3.44 Mean 1.51 Std. Dev.	79 Count 4.92 Mean 1.58 Std. Dev.	150 Count 4.07 Mean 1.49 Std. Dev.	413 4.18 1.63
Music (7)				148 Count 3.59 Mean 1.67 Std. Dev.	148 3.59 1.67
Snakes (8)				141 Count 4.39 Mean 1.79 Std. Dev.	141 4.39 1.79
Totals	114 Count 4.27 Mean 1.72 Std.	70 Count 3.44 Mean 1.51 Std. Dev.	79 Count 4.92 Mean 1 58 Std. Dev.	599 Count 3.95 Mean 1.65 Std. Dev.	862 4.04 1.68

SCORING RUBRIC FOR RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: PROMPT 5

	4	3	2	1
CONTENT	Supply all the requested information	Supply all the requested information	Supply most of the requested information	Make minimal attempt to supply the requested information
DEVELOPMENT	Use specific details and examples to develop ideas	Use some specific details and examples to develop ideas but not necessarily on a consistent basis	Use few details or examples to develop ideas; some listing may appear	Use few, if any, details or examples; naming or listing will frequently appear
ORGANIZATION	Demonstrate a clear and logical sense of order through appropriate paragraphing and use of transitions	Demonstrate a fairly consistent sense of order through paragraphing but may be inconsistent in use of transitions	Reveal some sense of order, but may be inconsistent in the use of paragraphs and/or transitions	Demonstrate inconsistency in ordering ideas and inconsistent use of paragraphs and transitions
SYNTAX	Demonstrate maturity and variety of sentence structure as well as vocabulary for audience and purpose	Demonstrate variety and control of sentence structure and vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose	Demonstrate some variety and control of sentence structure but control of vocabulary may be irregular	Demonstrate immaturity in sentence structure and show limited range of vocabulary
AUDIENCE	Understand intended audience's needs and address those needs clearly and with consistent point of view	Understand intended audience's needs and usually address those needs clearly and with a consistent point of view	May or may not address the audience's needs and will reveal inconsistencies in point of view	Show little attention to intended audience's needs and display no consistent point of view

CONVENTIONS	Exhibit only minimal errors, if any, in usage and mechanics, none of which detract from comprehension of the text; will display clearly legible handwriting	Exhibit some errors in usage and mechanics but these do not detract from comprehension of the text. Handwriting is clearly legible	Display frequent mechanics and usage errors which detract from the text; handwriting will not always be legible	Display numerous mechanics and usage errors which detract seriously from the text; handwriting frequently will be illegible
MODE	Respond in the specified format	Respond in the specified format	Respond in the specified format but ignore some elements	Show little understanding of specified format

SAMPLE PAPERS FOR RESPONSE TO PROMPT 5: LETTER TO KELLY*

Score: 1

Dear Kelly,

Our school here is a good school. We have alot of fun activities and teams We have the Volley ball team, track, gymnastics, intermurals. Some activities, we have there are the dances that we have about 5 or 6 times a year. Try to get your things together and meet new friends because once you do that you can conssintrait on your homework becuse good grades are very important. Stay AWAY from Mr. R. because hes mean. We have a great track areas, our school yard is very big. School starts at 8:15 A.M. they sometimes have lock outs and thats when you stay after school for a half hour. Here are some teachers that I can name to kind of help you out theres Mrs. D, Mrs. D., Mr. E., Mr. B., and Ms. P and that's all the teacher I know I hope you enjoy it here at . . . . .

Score: 2

Dear Kelly,

I hope you will like it here at our school. The place is very easy to get around. I'm sure you will have no trouble. There is only one level to it, I guess that makes it easy. The front of the school faces North. There is two ways to get in from the front 1st, the main door, the one that is so far back compared to the other school, The buses unload and load there. We have 5 buses. Now, the easiest way to find your way around, use the main door that leads you to the Main Office, and when you enroll, you'll get a map of the school, so you'll know where you're going.

About the teachers, most of them are O.K., but some of them you won't want to get stuck with. We have two 8th grade English teachers, Mrs. E. and Mr. K, he's cool, I think you'll like him. We have to girls gym teachers, Miss B. and Mrs. L, and two boys Coach H. and Mr. M. 3 science teachers; Mrs. G., Coach D. (he used to teach gym) Mr. S. 1 German teacher, Miss A (take german, it's easy and A is real nice.) A Spainish teacher, Mrs. H, who also teaches type.

Some of the Activities are dances, usually Halloween, Valentines, Day, and a Spring Dance. Some of the clubs are the Arrow Club, which requires I think a 3.0 or higher. Honor Roll, you need 5 honors on your report card, and the Blue and Silver Club I think is citizenship. Most of the places we go will usually require you be in the Arrow Club. The 9th graders get to do most of the fun stuff.

We have a fun run at the beginning of the year. We have presidential elections for each grade once a year, and were doing that right now.

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* Names and addresses have been deleted from the samples.

The classes you will be able to take are required, English, History, Reading, Computers, Science, P.E. Selected; Foreign Language, Type, Speech, Drama, Home Ec., Wood Shop, Car Shop, Band, Choir, Sewing, and Beginning Foods.

Well that covers most of the Basic stuff. Good luck and Hope you'll have fun.

Score: 3

Dear Kelly,

Hi, my name is ________. Our school is pretty nice. We have really good teachers. They're all nice.

We have many classes you can take here--band, french, german, Spanish, crafts, homaking, and etc. There are so many fun classes that even the really hard classes don't bother you as much. But don't think we just have fun in this school. We learn so much, so fast. We take required classes like history and science. Even though most people don't like those kind of classes they aren't that bad here. I mean the teachers are so nice and they help you so much, the hard classes are a little bit easier.

And you wanted to know about activities. Well we have many activities. We have assemblies, and dances, and if you get good citizenship in school you can go on a ski trip and to lagoon. In our assemblies, we do many things, we have concerts, talent shows, drama, plays, and sometimes we just have them to talk about school. Once we even had a snake man come. Even though our assemblies are fun, they're still all learning experiences. Every year we have about 4 dances. They're really fun too. Of course, you can't get bad citizenship or you won't get to go on a ski trip. That's super fun. Even if you don't know how to ski, you can go and take lessons. About the end of the year we go to lagoon. Now that is one of the funnest activities. We leave for Bountiful as soon as school starts. When we get there we pay and we can do anything we want.

If you ask me, our school is really fun. I like it a lot. What amazes me is you learn so much and it's still so fun. Well, I can't wait to meet you.

Score: 4

Dear Kelly,

I'm answering your letter about the school I attend, the things that we do here, and the way we do them.

Our school is a medium to large size for a junior high school.

We have good teachers who really care about the kind of grades that we get. Most of them will do anything that they can to help you out.

Our principal is a pretty straight forward guy, he is nice. Sometimes alot of people think he's too strict on such things as the dress code, but those people are just basically trying to cause trouble for theirselves.

At our school we have a lot of extra-cirricular classes available. We have band and orchestra, Spanish, German, and French, Karate, computer/keyboarding, type, and theatre arts or drama.

We have quite a few assemblies, dances, and activities. We usually have an assembly once or twice a month, and they are usually very interesting, funny, or exciting.

We have about three dances a year. Usually one in October, one in December, and on in April. In other words we have a Halloween Dance, a Christmas Dance, and an Easter Dance.

The activities that we have are usually really fun.

I don't know if your school is on the trimester schedule or not, so I'll just tell you about it anyway. We have five classes a day. Each one lasts seventy minutes. Our school starts at 7:50 and gets out at 2:20. Sometimes I think that it should start at 8:00 and get out at 2:30. To me that sounds a little less strange. But, oh well, they must have a good reason for it. Our first class goes from 7:50-9:00. Second hour goes from 9:05-10:15. After that half of the school has lunch until about 10:40, while the rest of us go to third hour from 10:20-11:30. Then we go to lunch. Fourth hour is from 12:00-1:10, and fifth hour is from 1:15-2:20. Fifth hour has five minutes less than the rest of the classes.

If you aren't used to it, it might sound a little confusing, but it's really not.

Well, I hope you enjoy our school as much as I do. I'm sure you will meet alot of new people and make a lot of friends. I'm sure I'll see you around.

Summary of Results for Prompt 5

Prompt 5 provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate two basic principles of writing: providing specific information in response to a request, and addressing a specific audience. The writing task was designed to provide students with a realistic situation--a potential classmate wanting to know as much as possible about the school where he or she might be enrolling--and a familiar mode or format by which the student writer could respond--the letter. In addition, the prompt contains specific clues for what should be included in the appropriate response as Kelly asks for information on teachers, classes, and activities; the student writer also is given the latitude to provide additional information if so inclined.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. One hundred sixty (160) students responded to Prompt 5. This prompt was tested only under Condition 4--silent reading without prewriting. The mean for the responses was 3.70, with a standard deviation of 1.47. Approximately 55 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 17 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 1.3 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. See Table 16 for summaries of the percentages and frequencies at each score point.

TABLE 16 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 5 COND: 4 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	1	.6	.6
2	44	27.5	28.1
3	26	16.3	44.4
4	44	27.5	71.9
5	18	11.3	83.1
6	18	11.3	94.4
7	7	4.4	98.8
8	2	1.3	100.0
TOTAL	160	100.0	

SCORING RUBRIC FOR NARRATIVE EMPHASIZING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: PROMPT 6

	4	3	2	1
CONTEXT	Provides rich descriptive background of objects, places or people for experience	Provides descriptive background of objects, places, or people	Name objects, places or people with little elaboration; or overemphasizes context, drawing attention away from incident	Lists or names objects with no description
INCIDENT	Narrates vivid account of personal involvement in an experience ("shows story")	Narrates personal involvement in experience ("tells story")	Lists action with some narration of personal experience	Has little or no development of action or personal experience
SIGNIFICANCE	Strongly emphasizes why experience was important	Implies or states why experience was important	Gives little indication why experience was important	Gives little or no indication of why experience was important
COHERENCE	Displays well-developed narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or has thematic unity	Displays narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or has thematic unity	Displays limited narrative structure (particularly with middle or end); or has little thematic unity	Displays little or no development of narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); or lacks thematic unity
CONVENTIONS	Has strong control over mechanics	May have errors; these do not interfere with communication	Has errors that may interfere with communication	Has errors that interfere with communication

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO PROMPT 6: POSSESSION

Score: 1

My favorite possession is my stuffed bunny, it's five feet tall it's a light, light yellow, it has long bushy ears with pink and blue in the middle. It has pink feet and hands, it's eyes are blueish black, and it has a pink nose. It is wearing a shiny blue tuxedo with a matching big, top hat and a tail gaurd which covers his big, fluffy, bushy tail. the reason it is my favorite possession is because my Grandpa died right after he gave it to me and that is the only thing that reminds me of my grandpa because he died when I really little and I didn't know him to well. My favorite possession, which is my bunny, sits on my bed during the day and I lay him on the floor at night. Some people think I'm stupid to have a stuffed bunny for a favorite possession, they say it's like having a teddy bear. But I don't listen I just ignor them or tell them the reason. If I tell them the reason they usually understand. When I got my stuffed bunny it was 2 1/2 feet taller than me.

Score: 2

My favorite possesion is a toy elephant that is sometimes cute and cuddley and other times is dirty and smelly. When he is cute and clean I play with him. He always keeps me company and I talk to him when I am feeling down. When I woke up Christmas morning I had no idea it was christmas becuse I was only six months old. My mom brought me out to the front room and the first thing I noticed the tree with the blinking lights. Then my mom gave me the doll. I just looked at it.

This doll that named baby bo bo, played with me all my life. I would play house and he would be my baby. He sits up. He looks like a regular doll with big ears and a big nose. I played with him so much that his button eyes fell off and my mom took a magic marker and drew dots for eyes. He is as old as me, fourteen years. He still is my favorite friend. He always talks to me.

When I am sick or don't feel like doing anything he comes out from his hiding spot and talks to me. Also he sleeps with me if I want him to.

Sometimes when I used to play with him, Baby Bo Bo would fall in some dirt and get dirty. Or he would get some food on him because he was a sloppy eater. If this happened my mom would wash him in the washer and then she would dry him in the dryer. After he was washed he felt warm and fuzzy.

Now that I have explained my favorite possession, I hope you will get an elpehant too.

Score: 3

One Christmas morning about 3 years ago, I went into the living room to see what santa had brought me. There were many wonderful gifts for me, but the one I noticed the most was a beautiful Keepsake doll.

It was not an ordinary doll because my mon had made it. The doll was very soft and her skin had a plush color to it. The doll was wearing a navy blue dress with real light orange flowers, it had white bloomers under the dress, and a white apron over it. She had brown hair made out of yarn and curled into ringletts with straws. Her eyes were blue to match her dress, and her lips and cheeks were a rosy pink. She had black felt shoes with a clear buttom to look like a holder. She had a silky white ribbon that pulled back part of her hair. She was very beautiful. She was on a special doll holder stand so I could keep her on my dresser. The first time I ever saw it, I had the feeling of aw, and I knew my mom loved me because she wouldn't have taken the time and patience to make that beautiful, neat, and special doll, if she didn't love me. So that's why my keep sake doll, is so special to me.

Score: 4

It was a cold, windy, autumn day. My brothers and I were upstairs playing like we knew karate. We were in our pajamas, kicking and punching. But we wouldn't really even touch the other person. All you could hear was yelling and jumping from downstairs, which ment that we were having fun.

One of my brothers went downstairs. But that didn't stop us from playing. We could fight without him. Then two more went downstairs. I just dept on playing. I thought that they might just be going down to get a drink or something. Then I heard my mom and dad's voices. They had gone out for the night, but I guess they came back. I suddenly heard the voices get louder. They were coming upstairs. My brothers all ran upstairs trying to beat my parents. They had big grins on their faces. I wondered if mom had brought ice cream home, or malts. But my brothers would have theirs by now if they did. Then I looked at my dad. He had a golden little ball of fur in his arms. My eyes wattered. I knew what it was because I had been asking for one for a long time. Then a long snout looked up at me and struggled to way its tail in my dads arms. When he got to the top of the stairway, he let it down. It walked towards me with its little tail wagging 50 miles an hour. I picked it up with a big smile. It licked me all over my face. I loved it all ready and I had a feeling that it loved me too. I looked at my mom and dad and said "Thank you" at least 7 times. I looked at the puppy again and asked what it was, a girl or Boy. It was a girl. So I named her Cindy. She had a long cute snout with a black nose. And she had little golden ears. And huge paws! I loved Cindy a whole bunch. You see, I had wanted a dog for over a year now but it had to be a golden retriever because those are my favorite kinds of dogs. And I sure got one! Cindy, my puppy!

Summary of Results for Prompt 6

Prompt 6 was the same writing task as that performed by third graders, except that at the eighth grade level this task was tested under all four conditions. The prompt asked students to combine narrative and description, in this case about a favorite possession. Directions suggest that the writing should focus on the time the writer received the possession. In addition, the prompt asked students to tell how they felt about the possession and why the possession was important to them. No particular audience was specified.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. Four hundred and thirteen (413) students responded to Prompt 6. The overall mean was 3.88, with a standard deviation of 1.50. Approximately 65 percent of the students scored a 4 or above on this writing task; 21 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 3.4 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. See Table 17 for summaries of the percentages and frequencies in the rankings.

TABLE 17 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 6 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	3	.7	.7
2	74	17.9	18.6
3	65	15.7	34.4
4	108	26.2	60.5
5	74	17.9	78.5
6	54	13.1	91.5
7	21	5.1	96.6
8	14	3.4	100.0
TOTAL	413	100.0	

Test conditions. Of the 413 students responding to this prompt, 114 responded with oral teacher direction and prewriting; 70 responded to the prompt with oral teacher direction but no prewriting; 79 responded to the prompt with silent reading but with prewriting; and 150 responded with silent reading and no prewriting.

A comparison of Tables 18-21 suggests some differences at a number of score points between the students writing under Condition 1 and those writing under the other conditions. Most notable, perhaps, is that the highest percentage of students achieving an 8 score (7 percent) appeared under Condition 1 while the lowest appeared under Condition 4 (.7 percent). Students writing under Condition 1 did markedly better at all levels than students writing under Condition 2, but students writing under Condition 3 showed a marked increase in the percentage achieving in the top three score categories (43 percent) as compared to those under Condition 1 (21 percent). The number of unscorable responses under condition 1 was identical to those under condition 3.

TABLE 18 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 6 COND: 1 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
2	20	17.5	17.5
3	20	17.5	35.1
4	29	25.4	60.5
5	20	17.5	78.1
6	12	10.5	88.6
7	5	4.4	93.0
8	8	7.0	93.0
TOTAL	114	100.0	

TABLE 19 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 6 COND: 2 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	2	2.9	2.9
2	20	28.6	31.4
3	16	22.9	54.3
4	17	24.3	78.6
5	7	10.0	88.6
6	7	10.0	98.6
8	1	1.4	98.6
TOTALS	70	100.0	

TABLE 20 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 6 COND: 3 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
2	7	8.9	8.9
3	7	8.9	17.7
4	19	24.1	41.8
5	12	15.2	57.0
6	24	30.4	87.3
7	6	7.6	94.9
8	4	5.1	100.0
TOTAL	79	100.0	

TABLE 21 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 6 COND: 4 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	1	.7	.7
2	27	18.0	18.7
3	22	14.7	33.3
4	43	28.7	62.0
5	35	23.3	85.3
6	11	7.3	92.7
7	10	6.7	99.3
8	1	.7	100.0
TOTAL	150	100.0	

SCORING RUBRIC FOR COMPOSING A PERSUASIVE SPEECH: PROMPT 7

	4	3	2	1
CONTENT	Address the issue clearly and establish and maintain a consistent position on the issue	Address the issue clearly and establish and maintain a consistent position on the issue	Reflect some inconsistency in identifying the issue and developing a position	Exhibit difficulty establishing a position or defining the issue
DEVELOPMENT	Support position with specific examples, facts and/or personal experience clearly related to issue	Support position with examples, facts and/or personal experience but with somewhat less detail than a "4" paper	Provide only general examples or facts to support a position; may reflect some contradictions in developing argument	Use highly general examples and facts, some of which may not be relevant to the issue
ORGANIZATION	Demonstrate a clear and logical sense of order through appropriate paragraphing and use of transitions	Demonstrate a fairly consistent sense of order through paragraphing but may be inconsistent in use of transitions	Reveal some sense of order, but may be in consistent in the use of paragraphs and/or transitions	Demonstrate inconsistency in ordering ideas and inconsistent use of paragraphs and transitions
SYNTAX	Demonstrate maturity and variety of sentence structure as well as vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose	Demonstrate variety and control of sentence structure and vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose	Demonstrate some variety and control of sentence structure but control of vocabulary may be irregular	Demonstrate immaturity in sentence structure and show limited range of vocabulary
AUDIENCE	Understand the intended audience's needs and address those needs clearly and with a consistent point of view while also acknowledging opposing views	Address the audience's needs while showing awareness of opposing views	May or may not address the intended audience's needs and will show little awareness of opposing views	Show little attention to intended audience's needs and display no consistent point of view or awareness of opposing views

CONVENTIONS	Exhibit only minimal errors, if any, in usage and mechanics, none of which detract from comprehension of the text; will display clearly legible handwriting	Exhibit some errors in usage and mechanics but these do not detract from comprehension of the text. Handwriting is clearly legible.	Display frequent mechanics and usage errors which detract from the text; handwriting will not always be legible	Display numerous mechanics and usage errors which detract seriously from the text; handwriting frequently will be illegible
MODE	Respond in the specified format	Respond in the specified format	May reveal uncertainty about appropriate format	Show little understanding of specified format

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO PROMPT 7: MUSIC

Score: 1

I think rock music is a bad influence on some kids, because the people I know about that are hard rock music lovers. Are the people I dont like to hang around with, because there language. There attides about life. And the drugs that are mostly involed with the kids.

I personitlily dont like hard rock music because it's not enjoy able to listen to and I mostly dont understand what they are saying. Most of the people that do listien to hard rock music are in little groups and they dont have a great deal of friends. So people dont like to hang around them is because they are consitly in trouble for doing something they werent so pose to do.

If I had a choose I would have all the hard rock music gone.

Score: 2

I think that in a way parents are right. But I also understand the teenagers. Some music has a meaning but some is just like somebody screaming into a microphone put it on tape and get paid lots of money for it. I don't have any simpathy for the teenagers who like that music. Rock music is divided into parts. For istances there is Soft Rock, Rock and Roll, Hard Rock, and Heavy Metal. Heavy Metal and some of Hard Rock I think we could do without. But kids do have rights if the parent dose'not want their child to list to what ever music they think is inappropreate they should take charge and do something but some parents don't care and it wouldn't be fair to take it all away. You've got to admit you must have liked rock and roll when you were young.

Thank you

Score: 3

Parents and students,

I am here to talk to you about an issue that involves us all. The issue of rock music at school dances, and on the radio.

I don't think all rock music is bad, but there is some the world could do without. This is what we should get off the radio and out of the dances.

Groups like the Jets and Lionel Richie aren't that bad. If you have never listened to them you really should, and then maybe you would agree with me.

The groups I am talking about that the world could really do without are the heavy metal group like Motley Crue and Def Leopard. All they sing about is violence and such, they never sing about good holesome things. I know some of you students, and maybe even some of the parents might really disagree with me on this but it's what I believe.

When I was in the seventh grade, my mixed glee teacher asked the students, if they had any of those heavy metal group records, to bring them so we could play them backwards to see if there were any backwards messages on them. You know what? Every single of the songs we listened too had a backward message on it. One of the songs said, "It's fun to smoke mariguano." I really don't believe that people need that kind of thing.

I hope that today I have convinced you that we don't need heavy metal groups, and that all rock music isn't bad.

Thank you for listening.

Score: 4

Today we are all gathered here to talk about rock music. Some of you parents want it banned from the stations and from the school dances. Others of you don't think of it as a problem.

I agree a little both of the groups. Some rock music should be banned from radio stations and from dances, but then there is some good rock music too. And I'm sure many students will agree with me.

For instance, heavy metal rock is something that can affect students in the wrong way. It is very loud and the lyrics aren't too great either. Some heavy metal if played backwards suggests wrong things. For example, drugs.

Last year I had the opportunity to attend a youth meeting about music. They played a song forward and then backward. Going backwards it said, "Its fun to smoke marajuana." I haven't ever listened to that song again. I never realized that those groups of singers sneaked things like that in.

So in a way I agree with those parents and students who want rock music banned.

But now for the other group of parents and students who don't think of it as a problem. This can be true if we let it. We will never know if rock music is good or bad if we don't listen to it. I have my own stereo and small clock radio. My sister has an advanced gheto blaster too. My mom and dad know that we know what kind of music is good or bad. I don't think they would have given us our radios if they had had any doubts.

I enjoy rock music alot. I also enjoy other kinds of music, but I know that many students only like rock. If their parents are worried about the effects of the music, they should listen to the music too. They will find, like my parents did, that all rock music isn't that bad. If a bad song comes on, just turn it to another station. You can just about always find a good song on with all of the many rock stations.

As for our rock station and our school dances, parents really shouldn't worry. The songs at the dances are always good songs, with no lyrics that can affect students in the wrong way. The station, though, we don't have alot of controll over. But I'm sure they don't play alot of heavy metal.

We as students would prefer it if the parents would agree to let rock music into the dances.

This is how I fell as a student and I thank you for all of your cooperation and support.

Summary of Results for Prompt 7

Prompt 7 required students to anticipate a situation in which a written text would serve as the basis for an oral presentation. Efforts were made to keep the situation as realistic as possible. The selection of rock music as a controversial issue and an audience of both parents and students was intended to provide a reasonable access point for all students. They were asked to take a position on the issue and to adopt a persuasive approach, using their own experience as well as any other evidence they thought appropriate. This prompt was tested only under Condition 4--silent reading without prewriting.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. One hundred forty-eight (148) students responded to Prompt 7. The mean was 3.52, with a standard deviation of 1.52. Approximately 13 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 1.4 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. See Table 22 for summaries of the percentages and frequencies in the rankings.

TABLE 22 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 7 COND: 4 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	5	3.4	3.4
2	43	29.1	32.4
3	20	13.5	45.9
4	46	31.1	77.0
5	15	10.1	87.2
6	8	5.4	92.6
7	9	6.1	98.6
8	2	1.4	100.0
TOTAL	148	100.0	

SCORING RUBRIC FOR AN INFORMATIVE REPORT: PROMPT 8

	4	3	2	1
CONTENT	Select relevant information and provide a focus through synthesis of the information; make generalizations and connections from the facts given	Select relevant information and provide a focus for it through synthesis; show some attempt at generalizing and making connections from the facts given	Provide a listing of facts with some evidence of an attempt to classify; little synthesis is evident although some attempt may be made to combine facts or rewrite them	List facts; parrot information given; no attempt to classify or to synthesize
DEVELOPMENT	Use specific details and examples to develop ideas	Use some specific details and examples to develop ideas but not necessarily on a consistent basis	Use few details or examples to develop ideas; some listing may appear	Use few, if any, details or examples; naming or listing will frequently appear; no generalizing or connecting will occur
ORGANIZATION	Demonstrate a clear and logical sense of order through appropriate paragraphing and use of transitions	Demonstrate a fairly consistent sense of order through paragraphing but may be inconsistent in use of transitions	Reveal some sense of order, but may be inconsistent in the use of paragraphs and/or transitions	Demonstrate inconsistency in ordering ideas and inconsistent use of paragraphs and transitions
SYNTAX	Demonstrate maturity and variety of sentence structure as well as vocabulary appropriate for audience purpose	Demonstrate variety and control of sentence structure and vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose	Demonstrate some variety and control of sentence structure but control of vocabulary may be irregular	Demonstrate immaturity in sentence structure and show limited range of vocabulary
AUDIENCE	Understand the intended audience's needs and address those needs clearly and with a consistent point of view	Understand the intended audience's needs and usually address those needs clearly and with a consistent point of view	May or may not address the intended audience's needs and will reveal inconsistencies in point of view	Show little attention to intended audience's needs and display no consistent point of view

CONVENTIONS	Exhibit only minimal errors, if any, in usage and mechanics, none of which detract from comprehension of the text; will display clearly legible handwriting	Exhibit some errors in usage and mechanics but these do not detract from comprehension of the text. Handwriting is clearly legible	Display frequent mechanics and usage errors which detract from the text; handwriting will not always be legible	Display numerous mechanics and usage errors which detract seriously from the text; handwriting frequently will be illegible
MODE	Respond in the specified format, showing use of the 5 W's	Respond in the specified format, showing control of the 5 W's	Respond in the specified format but ignore some elements of the 5 W's	Show little understanding of specified format, ignoring most if not all of the 5 W's

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO PROMPT 8: SNAKES

Score: 1

King Cobra

His name is tinker bell, He is 3 ft, he is from india, he strikes very slowly, when scared, angered or nervous. he raises his hood has a very deadly bite. This snake dosent move to snake charmers music. King cobras kill about 25,000 Indians per year. Large King cobras have enough venom to kill hundreds of people.

Python

This 8 foot Guy is named Crackin His home town is India it took 14 members of the audience to hold him. He is'nt like the Diamond Rattlesnake be cause a Python lays eggs. He looks really lazy. He likes being by water. this snake is'nt poisonous but I woldend like to be bitten by him they have large appatites because they eat goats, pigs, and deer.

Score: 2

A man by the name John Burton, an expert on snakes came to an assembly at the ____ Junior High and showed some snakes. He had 3 snake which were named Elvis, Crackin and Tinkerbell.

Elvis is an rattel snake which has long hollw fangs and is most dangerous. Elvis, upper third body raises in to an s when ready to atack. He stabs his preay and is very posinus Elvis gives life to live babies.

Crackin, is a very big snake he's a python over 8 ft long. John pickes 14 people to come down and hold him. He lays eggs and very suggish. he isfound near water and is fonded not poisonous he kill by constricting i don't like the sound of that. He fonded to kill anbd eat goats, pigs and deer. One pythion in Malaysia ate a 14 year old boy so they are very dangerous.

tinkerbell is a King Cobra. He kills over 25,000 people a year one corbra has enobventin to kill hundons of people. He is 3 ft long and has a hood and strikes slowly their is no antidot to cure a person. He fites and chews his food and lives in india.

this snake guy mus have nerves of steel. I hate snakes they are scarey. I'm glad that some people are showing us kids more about exciting things like snakes.

Score: 3

John Burton, an expert on snakes, showed our school an assembly about them. He brought three snakes: a diamond rattle snake named Elvis, a king cobra named Tinkerbell, and a Python named Crackin.

Elvis, the rattle snake, has long hollow fangs and is the most dangerous rattler in the United States. Elvis also has hollow teeth like hypodermic needles. When Elvis rests he has his body curled up. When Elvis gets mad the upper third part of his body raises into an S-shape, and strikes his prey with the whole length of the S-shape. Elvis stabs his pray with his fangs and releases a venom. When Elvis eats, he swallows his food whole. Elvis does not lay eggs, instead he gives live babies.

Tinkerbell, the king cobra, is a three foot snake from India. She attacks without being angered, but strikes slowly. She is a hooded cobra and bites and chews with short fangs as the venom runs into the wound, and has a deadly bite with no antibiotics for the venom. Tinkerbell does not move to snake charmers music but instead she sways to snake charmers movements. The king cobra kills 25,000 Indian natives a year and has enough venom to kill hundreds of people.

Crackin, the python, is an eight foot python from india. At the asembly it took fourteen people to hold Crackin up. Crackin and other pythons do lay eggs and are sluggish or lazy snakes that are usually found by water. Pythons are not poisonous, they kill prey by constricting. Large pythons kill goats, pigs, and deer. A python in Malaysia ate a fourteen year old boy.

The assembly was neat and if you ever get the chance to see it I would advise to do so.

Score: 4

We recently had an expert on snakes visit our school. His name is John Burton. He brought with him a variety of snakes, but the most impressive snakes by far were the Diamond Rattlesnake, King Cobra, and the Python. I could tell they were impressive by the ooo's and aahh's of the students. Mr. Burton had sort of a comical attitude toward the snakes because their names were Elvis, tinkerbell, and Crackin.

Elvis, the diamond rattlesnake, is the most dangerous rattlesnake in the United States. His teeth are hollow so the poision may be injected easily. When resting, he lays with his body coiled, but when attacking prey, he raises the upper one-third of his body and rattles its rattle. After injecting poision he then swallows his food whole. It's interesting that the poision tht kills the prey has no effect on the snake. Unlike the python, the diamnd rattlesnake gives birth to live babies.

Tinkerbell, a King Cobra, is only three feet long. It attacks whenever it is angered and sometimes when it's not. When attacking, the cobra reveals its hood. It strikes slowly and bites and chews as venom runs into the wound. Sometimes we see on T.V. snake charmers with thier "magical" music, but this one doesn't move when "magical" music is played but it sways to charmers' movements. It is a very deadly snake because it kills twenty-five thousand Indian people per year. Having an incurable venonm, a lare cobras venom can kills hundreds of people.

Crackin, the python, is eight feet long and it took fourteen students to hold it. The python is a sluggish, lazy snake and lays eggs. Unlike the other two it kills its prey b constricting its powerful muscles until the victim cannot breathe. Large pythons can kill goats, pigs, deer and a python in Malaysia ate a fourteen year old boy!

I'm sure you enjoyed the assembly as much as I did and maybe Mr. Burton will be willing to return next year.

Summary of Results for Prompt 8

Prompt 8 offered students the opportunity to demonstrate their familiarity with a particular format--the news story--as well as an opportunity to show their ability to synthesize and organize a collection of controlled data. Unlike other writing prompts where students were free to draw upon their own personal experience, all students wrote from the same basic data. An implied audience of other students was provided, and some clues on the opening of the story also offered more guidance than with other prompts. This prompt was tested only under Condition 4--silent reading with no prewriting.

Frequencies and percentages of scores. One hundred forty-one (141) students responded to Prompt 8. The mean for this writing task was 4.34, with a standard deviation of 1.79. Approximately 75 percent of the students scored 4 or above on this task; 24 percent achieved a ranking of 6 or above, while 4.3 percent achieved the highest ranking of 8. Table 23 provides a summary of the percentages and frequencies at each ranking.

TABLE 23 GRADE: 8 PROMPT: 8 COND: 4 HOLISTIC SCORE

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
0	6	4.3	4.3
2	15	10.6	14.9
3	14	9.9	24.8
4	42	29.8	54.6
5	29	20.6	75.2
6	17	12.1	87.2
7	12	8.5	95.7
8	6	4.3	100.0
TOTAL	141	100.0	

TABLE 24 GRADE: 3 SCORES BY DISTRICT

CONDITION		OVERALL				DISTRICT 1		DISTRICT 2		DISTRICT 3		DISTRICT 4		DISTRICT 5	
		PROMPT				PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT	
		Place	Possess	Day	Scary	Place	Possess	Place	Possess	Day	Scary	Day	Scary	Place	Possess
Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean	3.53	3.85	3.09	3.53	3.41			4.27	3.27			3.93	3.29	
	Std	1.48	1.56	1.58	1.66	1.23			1.68	1.14			1.34	1.38	
	N	116	112	99	99	34			30	30			30	28	
Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean	3.63	3.76	4.14	3.10		3.63	4.19			3.62	4.79			3.07
	Std	1.82	1.65	2.18	1.84		1.61	1.66			1.48	2.09			1.11
	N	112	123	103	99		35	27			39	29			27
		3.58	3.80	3.62	3.31										
		1.65	1.60	1.95	1.76										
		228	235	202	198										

CONDITION		DISTRICT 6		DISTRICT 7		DISTRICT 8		DISTRICT 9		DISTRICT 10		DISTRICT 11	
		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT	
		Place	Possess	Day	Scary	Day	Scary	Place	Possess	Place	Possess	Day	Scary
Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean		3.52	2.87			2.35	3.88			4.22	3.10	
	Std		1.17	1.74			1.23	1.13			1.34	1.41	
	N		21	23			23	25			32	21	
Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean	3.50			3.45	3.81			5.13	2.74			2.89
	Std	1.42			2.04	2.33			1.70	1.98			1.91
	N	26			20	26			32	31			18

CONDITION		DISTRICT 12		DISTRICT 13		DISTRICT 14		DISTRICT 15		DISTRICT 16	
		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT		PROMPT	
		Day	Scary	Place	Possess	Place	Possess	Day	Scary	Day	Scary
Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean	3.12		3.58			3.24	3.08			4.71
	Std	1.68		2.01			1.70	1.75			1.23
	N	25		29			29	25			21
Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean		4.28		3.07	4.21			2.05	3.45	
	Std		1.84		3.10	1.75			1.81	2.42	
	N		28		29	28			22	20	

TABLE 25 GRADE: 8 SCORES BY DISTRICT

GRADE 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ns for Holistic Scores by Prompt and Condition

PROMPT		Overall				District 1		District 3		District 4	District 5		District 6	
		Oral w/ Prewriting	Oral w/o Prewriting	Silent w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting
Letter	Mean				3.78		3.40		4.25	4.00		4.20		5.57
	Std				1.58		1.14		4.98	1.36		2.28		1.51
	N				160		5		16	15		5		7
Possession	Mean	4.27	3.44	4.92	4.07	3.70	3.83	5.21	4.50	5.15	3.41	4.00	2.96	4.71
	Std	1.72	1.51	1.58	1.49	1.20	1.33	1.23	0.94	0.90	1.07	0.71	1.28	1.50
	N	114	70	79	150	27	6	28	14	13	32	5	45	7
Music	Mean				3.59		3.00		4.14	4.42		3.25		5.86
	Std				1.67		1.00		1.83	1.08		0.96		1.46
	N				148		5		14	12		4		7
Snakes	Mean				4.39		4.60		4.75	4.79		5.00		5.71
	Std				1.79		1.34		1.71	0.97		2.16		1.50
	N				141		5		12	14		4		7
		4.27	3.44	4.92	3.95	3.70	3.71	5.21	4.39	4.57	3.41	4.11	2.96	5.46
		1.72	1.51	1.58	1.65	1.20	1.27	1.23	1.55	1.16	1.07	1.64	1.28	1.48
		114	70	79	599	27	21	28	56	54	32	18	45	28

PROMPT		District 7		District 8	District 9		District 10		District 12	District 13		District 14	District 15	District 16	
		Silent w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Oral w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting	Silent w/ Prewriting	Silent w/o Prewriting
Letter	Mean		2.83	3.27		3.89		3.67	3.38		4.43	2.86	4.25		2.29
	Std		1.33	1.44		1.27		1.03	1.15		1.27	1.17	1.83		0.76
	N		6	15		9		6	16		7	14	32		7
Possession	Mean	4.27	2.86	4.15	4.13	5.00	4.32	3.67	3.00	4.45	5.14	3.21	4.13	5.48	3.80
	Std	1.74	1.07	1.57	1.52	1.20	1.52	1.37	1.41	1.53	1.95	1.25	1.55	1.47	1.79
	N	30	7	13	32	8	25	6	15	22	7	14	30	21	5
Music	Mean		3.43	3.92		3.75		4.00	2.53		3.86	2.36	3.57		3.14
	Std		1.90	1.62		1.16		2.76	1.60		0.90	1.50	1.43		1.07
	N		7	12		8		6	15		7	14	30		7
Snakes	Mean		4.17	4.40		4.78		4.17	3.13		4.00	2.33	4.55		5.20
	Std		2.71	1.84		0.97		0.75	1.53		1.41	1.07	1.90		0.84
	N		6	10		9		6	15		7	12	29		5
		4.27	3.31	3.88	4.13	4.35	4.32	3.88	3.02	4.45	4.36	2.70	4.12	5.48	3.46
		1.74	1.81	1.61	1.52	1.23	1.52	1.57	1.53	1.53	1.58	1.28	1.71	1.47	1.50
		30	26	50	32	34	25	24	61	22	28	54	121	21	24

VI. Discussion of Findings

Reviewing the results of an assessment such as this one often raises more questions than it provides answers. The review is doubly difficult in this case, since the assessment was a pilot and therefore has a limited population and no base-line data for comparative purposes. However, some useful information has emerged from the assessment which would seem to have implications for future large-scale testing in writing. For the purposes of brevity and clarity, the discussion of this information will focus primarily on several key issues: the writing prompts, the scoring procedures, and special issues such as third readings and gender performance.

Prompts

Design. Designing effective prompts is not an easy task. Participants in the UWP Summer Institute, all experienced writing teachers, found that what they initially thought would be clear and focused writing tasks turned out not to be so. Much of the difficulty in designing prompts arose from the assumptions made about prior knowledge and skill levels; teachers also discovered that directions had to be very explicit to draw a particular kind of writing from students.

The general strategy used in developing prompts was to focus on "universal" experiences with which students could identify. Since students would not have seen the writing task in advance and would have only 45 minutes to complete the task, it was important that the prompt be what Gordon Brossell (1987) calls "content fair"; that is, students should be able to select their own subject matter. In one case, however, the decision was made to use what is called "controlled data" in an effort to see what, if any, difference this might make. In a "controlled data" prompt (see Prompt 8 for the eighth grade), the rhetorical situation is carefully defined and the actual information to be used in the writing is provided. The student's task, therefore, is to decide upon the best approach to applying the information to the writing task. (For a useful discussion of designing writing prompts, consult Ruth and Murphy, 1987).

Originally the design for the assessment called for testing all prompts under four conditions, two of which called for silent reading. A small field test of one of the early prompts in a third grade setting quickly revealed that third graders, at least those at the beginning of the year, could not handle the silent reading effectively in the allotted time. For that reason, third graders were tested only under Conditions 1 and 2, both of which had the teacher doing oral reading of the prompt.

Another issue that surfaced during the design stage was the role of the teacher. Since the assessment was designed to permit classroom teachers to administer it, the directions had to be as clear and as consistent as possible. This did not prove to be a difficult task when developing Condition 2, since the teacher under this condition simply read the prompt aloud to the students. However, under Conditions 1 and 3, where teachers were involved with directing the prewriting sequence, very precise directions had to be developed to insure consistency at test sites. Many teachers who administered the assessment under Conditions 1 or 3 commented about the script quality of the directions (See Appendix F) but in no case did the teachers indicate that the script was a major problem in the test administration.

Effects of Prewriting.

One of the key elements to be tested in the assessment was the impact of prewriting. All third grade prompts were tested with and without prewriting sequences; in all cases where prewriting was used, the teacher directions and the actual prewriting steps were identical (See Appendix H). At grade 8, prompt 6 was tested under four conditions, two with prewriting and two without prewriting.

In the cases where prewriting was involved at the eighth grade (Conditions 1 and 3), the mean for performance was substantially higher than the mean for performance without prewriting (See comparison of means in Appendix H). At the third grade level, however, the picture was not as clear. With two out of four prompts, the means for performance under the prewriting condition were lower than those without prewriting.

A cursory review of the prewriting or planning sheets for third graders suggested that far less material appeared on those sheets than was the case for the eighth graders. One might conjecture that third graders have, understandably, had far less practice with prewriting (see Graves, 1983) and therefore are less accustomed to using it in their writing. In fact, for some it might actually prove counterproductive, since in some cases, at least, students who had substantial writing on the prewriting sheet often did not have a very lengthy final text.

In further support of this hypothesis, during the initial field testing of one of the prewriting sequences for third graders it was noted that the teacher did such a thorough job of taking students through the prewriting steps that a number of students lost interest in converting their material from the prewriting page into the final draft. At best, then, the success of prewriting at the third grade level seems mixed; at the eighth grade level, however, it clearly had a positive impact.

Most Effective Prompt.

In trying to determine the most effective prompt at each grade level, three measures were used: the percentage of unscorable papers generated in connection with the prompt; the means for each prompt, and the percentage of papers at the highest level. The most effective prompt, therefore, would be one that permits the most able student to do well while also distributing papers among the various score points.

Prompt 2 (Possession) emerged at the third grade level as the most effective, followed by Prompt 3 (unusual day). The least effective was Prompt 4 (scary experience). At the eighth grade level, Prompt 8 (Snakes), followed by Prompt 6 (Possession), was clearly the most effective; the least effective was Prompt 7 (Music).

The overall distribution among means and scoring percentages for all prompts was remarkably close; still, there were also some clear differences. In analyzing the characteristics of the effective prompts at both grade levels, one might conjecture that a shared characteristic was the concreteness found in both; that is, in Prompt 2, students were asked to select a prized possession. Although some students selected somewhat abstract choices, such as family, most chose an object which clearly did have an important role in their lives; the result was obvious--the writing was more specific, generally better organized, and the writers displayed more of their personality. Prompt 8 also was concrete but in a different way; the presence of the controlled data, and the specific rhetorical situation provided a clear direction for students, and they seemed to respond well. Remarkably, this prompt was the only one in the entire assessment which did not have any third readings (See Appendix I).

The two prompts identified as least effective, Prompts 4 and 7, do not appear to have any elements in common. Prompt 4 asked students to relate a scary experience; the emphasis was placed on personal experience but a substantial percentage of students chose to construct stories of fantasy and horror, leading to a fairly high percentage of unscorable papers; in addition, there were fewer papers at the high end of the scoring ranks. Readers during the holistic scoring sessions commented on the difficulty students seemed to have relating a believable narrative to emotion. With Prompt 7, the problem seemed to be a lack of familiarity with strategies for persuasive argument even with the audience identified. Although the topic of rock music seemed to stimulate some strong feelings on the part of the writers, many exhibited considerable difficulty in marshalling any convincing evidence or a consistent argument.

Special Issues

Several special issues emerged from the assessment. Among these were the relationship of third readings to the overall scoring process, the percentage of unscorable papers, the performance of males versus females, and the comparison of performance by third graders and eighth graders on the same writing prompt.

Third Readings.

In holistic scoring, if readers disagree by more than one point on a particular writing sample, then the piece is read by a third reader. Myers (1980) and Duke (1985) indicate that an inter-rater reliability coefficient of .80-.90 is reliable in holistic scoring. In this assessment, an overall inter-rater agreement of .94 was achieved in scoring 1725 writing samples.

At the third grade level, the overall inter-rater reliability coefficient was .96. The greatest number of third readings (23 out of 862) occurred with those samples written under Condition 2--teacher oral direction without prewriting. Prompt 2 (Possession) under Condition 2 was the single prompt to attract the most third readings (12 out of 123). Prompt 1 (Place) under Condition 1--teacher oral direction with prewriting--garnered the fewest third readings (1 out of 116).

At the eighth grade level, the overall inter-rater reliability coefficient was .93. Prompt 7 (Music) under Condition 4 attracted the most third readings (14 out of 148). Prompt 8 (Snake), tested only under Condition 4, had the distinction of being the only prompt in the full assessment not to garner any third readings. (See Appendix I for comparisons among prompts).

Unscorable Papers.

The category of unscorable papers is reserved for those writing samples which clearly do not address the topic, are blank or illegible. At Grade 3, 6.6 percent (57 out of 863) were unscorable. At Grade 8, 1.7 percent (15 out of 862) were unscorable. Prompt 4 at the third grade level produced the most unscorable papers (10.1 percent). The majority of these were off topic, with students choosing to create fantasy rather than to deal with real life experiences. Prompt 8 at the eighth grade level produced the most unscorable papers (4.3 percent); most of these seemed unable to deal with the controlled data and/or specified rhetorical situation. Table 26 shows the percentages of unscorable papers for each prompt.

Table 26 Percentage of Unscorable Papers by Prompt

Prompt No.	Percentage
1	5.7
2	2.6
3	8.9
4	10.1
5	.6
6	.7
7	3.4
8	4.3

Gender.

Differences between male and female performances at both the third and eighth grade were consistent. Females at both grade levels outperformed males at the higher score points of 6 or above (18 percent for the third grade, 25 percent for the eighth grade). More males than females at both grade levels scored 3 or below (53 percent at the third grade, 49 percent at the eighth grade). The percent of unscorable papers for males and females at both grade levels showed no real difference. In terms of mean performance, in all cases except one, the mean for females was higher at both grade levels than it was for males.

The third grade population of 861 students contained 461 males and 400 females. An examination of their overall performance shows that approximately 38 percent of the females scored 3 or lower while 53 percent of the males registered scores of 3 or lower. It should be noted, however, that the percent of unscorable papers for males and females remained virtually identical (6.5 percent for females, 6.7 percent for males). At the higher score ranges, 6 or above, the females showed a higher percentage of achievement (18 percent) than the males did (8 percent). Of the third graders receiving a score of 8, 82 percent were females.

Males performed best on Prompt 3 under Condition 2; poorest performance occurred on Prompt 4 under Condition 2. For the females, the average mean on all writing tasks was 3.84 with a standard deviation of 1.74. The females performed best on Prompt 3, Condition 2, while their poorest performance occurred also on Prompt 3 under Condition 1. (See Appendix I for comparison of means on all writing tasks).

The eighth grade population of 861 students contained 373 males and 488 females. The average mean for male eighth graders on all writing tasks was 3.57 with a standard deviation of 1.49. For the females, the average mean on all writing tasks was 4.46, with a standard deviation of 1.59. An examination of their overall performance shows that approximately 26 percent of the females scored 3 or lower, while 49 percent of the males registered scores of 3 or lower. The difference in unscorable papers was minimal (1 percent for females, 2 percent for males). At the higher score ranges, 6 or above, the females showed a higher percentage of achievement (25 percent) than did the males (12 percent). Of the eighth graders receiving a score of 8, 79 percent were females.

Males performed best on Prompt 6, Condition 3, while their poorest performance occurred with Prompt 7 under Condition 4. The females performed best on Prompt 6, Condition 3, while their poorest performance was recorded also with Prompt 3 under Condition 2. (See Appendix I for comparison of means on all writing tasks).

Performance on the Same Prompt.

Only one prompt was shared in common between the two grade levels. Prompt 2 at the third grade level and Prompt 6 at the eighth grade level were identical. It is possible to get a picture of how third and eighth graders handled this prompt only under Conditions 1 and 2.

Some interesting comparisons emerge when the performance of the two grade levels is placed side by side. At both grade levels, the mean was higher under Condition 1 and the percentage of students scoring 2, 3 or 4 under that condition was lower. Aside from these commonalities, however, the rest of the picture is somewhat less clear. For example, for the eighth grade under Condition 1 there were no unscorable papers while at the third grade, Condition 1 registered a few unscorable papers. In terms of percentages of high scores (7-8), Condition 2 produced better results at the third grade while at the eighth grade, no difference existed between the two conditions. Finally, this prompt produced the most effective writing for the third grade and was second most effective for the eighth grade.

VII. ANALYSIS OF WRITING ERRORS

As context for this analysis of writing errors, it is important to remember two important points about the pilot test of the Utah Writing Assessment: 1) the early October test represents an assessment of students after two and seven years of schooling respectively, not three and eight years; 2) students had little opportunity to revise, edit, and proofread their work during the test period of 45 minutes. In other words, the pilot test represents an assessment of "first draft" writing for students just entering grade 3 and 8.

To analyze errors, a decision was made to examine ten papers from each of the four score points at each grade level--a total of 80 papers. For sampling, papers were pulled randomly, then scanned for gender code. Next, additional papers were pulled so that an equal number of boys and girls were included at each of the score points for both grade levels.

The purpose of this analysis was to provide an overview of error frequencies that characterize writing at differing levels of achievement. A simple taxonomy was developed so that frequencies of errors could be tabulated systematically. This taxonomy is shown below:

I. Punctuation (sentence end stop)

    A. Fragment
    B. Comma splice/fused sentence

II. Usage
    A. Subject/verb agreement
    B. Capitalization

III. Spelling
    A. Homonyms/contractions
    B. General spelling

These categories of error were derived from core standards and from rubrics developed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. (For students at grade 3, frequencies of error were also tallied for a third category under the Punctuation heading--the "on-and-on sentence.")

For each grade level, the UWP co-directors read ten papers at each of four score points (8, 6, 4, and 2), tallying errors and counting total words per paper. Dividing the total errors in each category by the total number of words at each score point provided a way of describing error rate per 1000 words. Error rates are, in effect, probability statements--the number of items of a certain type that one would expect to encounter in 1000 words of text at a given score point.

Table 27 provides an overview of error rates per 1000 words at each of four score points for grade 3. In examining these data, it is important to note that students at scorepoint 8 wrote over twice as many words (mean length = 131 words) as students at scorepoint 2 (mean length = 64 words). In other words, fluency seems to be a very important factor in qualitative ratings (See Appendix J for frequencies of error).

TABLE 27: GRADE 3 ERROR RATES PER 1000 WORDS

		SCORE 8	SCORE 6	SCORE 4	SCORE 2
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)				
	A. Fragment	.005	.008	.003	.005
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	.018	.017	.023	.034
	C. On-and-on sentence	.002	.008	.010	.012
II.	Usage				
	A. Subject/verb agreement	.002	.002	.002	.000
	B. Capitalization	.013	.022	.015	.042
III.	Spelling				
	A. Homonyms/contractions	.006	.008	.009	.003
	B. General spelling	.069	.082	.090	.146

There are at least three points of interest in Table 27. Note first of all that error rates tend to increase as qualitative scores decline. This pattern seems especially clear for general spelling. Note also the very low rates of error for sentence fragments and subject/verb agreement. Note finally that with the "on-and-on sentence," students at scorepoint 2 produce about six times as many errors as their counterparts at scorepoint 8. As expected, students at lower developmental stages are less in control of basic writing mechanics at grade 3.

Table 28 provides the same comparative information for students at grade 8. However, there was no need to tally the "on-and-on sentence" for eighth grade papers. As was the case with third graders, fluency for students at scorepoint 8 (mean length = 257 words) nearly doubled that for students at scorepoint 2 (mean length = 137 words). (See Appendix J for frequencies of error).

TABLE 28: GRADE 8 ERROR RATES PER 1000 WORDS

		SCORE 8	SCORE 6	SCORE 4	SCORE 2
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)				
	A. Fragment	.001	.003	.003	.001
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	.010	.011	.014	.012
II.	Usage				
	A. Subject/verb agreement	.001	.001	.000	.001
	B. Capitalization	.002	.002	.002	.009
III.	Spelling				
	A. Homonyms/contractions	.001	.004	.010	.014
	B. General spelling	.010	.016	.037	.028

Table 28 holds a few surprises. Note first of all that error rates in three categories (fragments, comma splice/fused sentence, and subject/verb agreement) are virtually identical across score points. Note secondly the extremely low incidence of error in fragments and subject/verb agreement, a pattern already noted in grade 3 data. Note finally that with spelling errors, there are clear differences between students at scorepoint 4 and 2 as compared with their counterparts at scorepoints 8 and 6. For eighth graders at least, spelling seems to be the error type that distinguishes low-rated papers from high-rated ones.

A comparison of error rates for grades 3 and 8 is shown below in Table 29. This table provides a general picture of the decline in error rates over time (five years of schooling).

TABLE 29: A COMPARISON OF GRADE 3 AND GRADE 8 ERROR RATES PER 1000 WORDS

	SCORE 8		SCORE 6		SCORE 4		SCORE 2	
	GR3	GR8	GR3	GR8	GR3	GR8	GR3	GR8
Punctuation (end stop)								
Fragment	.005	.001	.008	.003	.003	.003	.005	.001
Comma splice/fused sentence	.018	.010	.017	.011	.023	.014	.034	.012
Usage								
Subject/verb agreement	.002	.001	.002	.001	.002	.000	.000	.001
Capitalization	.013	.002	.022	.002	.015	.002	.042	.009
Spelling								
Homonyms/contractions	.006	.001	.008	.004	.009	.010	.003	.014
General spelling	.069	.010	.082	.016	.090	.037	.146	.028

From the data presented in Table 29, it seems clear that students in Utah make progress in virtually all areas as they progress through the grades. Progress is evident at each of the four score points, not just at the upper levels of development. In certain areas, such as capitalization and general spelling, progress is very dramatic; in other areas, such as comma splice/fused sentence, declines in the rate of error are slower, often persisting into the high school grades. For students at scorepoint 2 in the eighth grade, certain types of error (spelling of homonyms/contractions) actually increase slightly.

There are possible implications for instruction in these data. Consider, for example, the surprisingly low incidence of error in certain areas--such as sentence fragments and subject/verb agreement. Since these errors appear to be well under control, even at grade 3, they probably deserve relatively less attention from language arts teachers. Likely target areas would appear to be comma splice/fused sentence, capitalization, and general spelling.

The final table presented here relates to fluency--the mean number of words produced by students at each of the four score point for grade 3 and grade 8. These data are shown in Table 30.

TABLE 30: MEAN FLUENCY FOR GRADE 3 AND GRADE 8

	SCORE 8	SCORE 6	SCORE 4	SCORE 2
GRADE 3	131	92	106	64
GRADE 8	257	313	220	137

Since better students write more fluently, it seems clear that fluency itself should be a high instructional priority. Without fluency, of course, one cannot make progress in basic skills.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress--an assessment of student writing at ages 9, 13, and 17--the number of errors that students make in punctuation, capitalization, and fragments does not appear to decrease but remains more or less constant with increasing age. This occurs not as result of student perversity but because students generate more text and thus produce more opportunities for error. Indeed, in attempting more complex syntax and more complex forms of discourse, students often increase their rates of error. In her landmark study, Errors and Expectations (1977), Mina Shaugnessey observed, for example, that misuses of the semicolon become "epidemic" when first introduced.

A sensible perspective on error is based on an understanding of children's language development. As Graves (1983) and Calkins (1987) have shown, many errors disappear naturally as students engage in meaningful reading/writing activities--writing regularly for real communicative purposes. Children should attend to error at the final stages of the writing process, not in its beginning stages. With regard to writing development, we should remember that the process of skill acquisition is glacially slow and that direct attention to error through grammatical analysis, worksheets, and other non-writing activities often produces deleterious effects on student writing. From roughly 80 years of empirical research, we know that the direct study of grammar does not help students to write well (Hillocks, 1986).

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In preparing this report for the Utah State Office of Education, we have been keenly aware that, to some extent, assessment drives curriculum. In Utah, as elsewhere, teachers pay attention to what is tested and act accordingly in the planning of day-to-day lessons and the shaping of programs for children.

Because of the political nature of assessment, we believe that testmakers have a special ethical responsibility to the community. Assessments must be designed to reinforce and support sound educational practice, not undermine it. Moreover, assessments must be undertaken with the knowledge and consent of educators at all levels. Finally, assessment results must be interpreted thoughtfully and used in an educationally responsible way. In short, a sound state assessment must itself be continually assessed in relation to the standards articulated above.

From our association with educators in other states, we know that there are great dangers for abuse of assessments in writing. In Florida, for example, assessments have been designed that actually promote skill-and-drill teaching. In some states, teachers have been virtually excluded from the policy making process that determines the nature of assessment. In still other states, particularly in the southeast, district administrators have used assessments of student performance to compare teachers for salary decisions, and certain newspapers have made invidious "rankings" of schools.

The net result of such abuses, of course, has been a profound demoralization of teachers and an attendant deterioration of educational quality. In those parts of the country where legislators and policy makers use test scores as a public relations weapon to make teachers "accountable," many teachers simply "teach to the test," with little regard for their larger responsibilities. In an effort to bring up test scores, other teachers put undue pressure on children and end up creating more literacy problems than they solve.

In Utah, where the political climate demands increased "productivity" because of financial constraints, a strong potential exists for abuse of assessments. Such abuse, we believe, would arise not from any malevolence on the part of legislators or policy makers but simply from the belief that educational reform (a desirable end) can be effected through coercive or manipulative strategies. In short, we believe that even the best of intentions may be perverted as programs of assessment are implemented.

Clearly, the alternative approach is one that involves teachers from the outset. We believe that a coherent plan for assessment should be developed and that teachers should be involved in approving it. In our opinion, a Writing Assessment Board should be created to oversee all aspects of the assessment process. This Board would be a funded entity, with authority and responsibility for conducting writing assessments in Utah. A major function of this Board would be to involve teachers throughout the state in assessment and to prepare reports for the State Office of Education.

General Recommendations

Having expressed our concerns, we respectfully invite consideration of the following general recommendations.

1. Create a Writing Assessment Board, perhaps through the Utah Writing Project, to oversee the overall plan for assessment as well as its implementation. Working with state officials, this Board would determine assessment policy, guard against potential abuses of

assessment data, implement a statewide writing test, and prepare assessment reports. Teachers would have a strong voice on the Board.

2. Use writing assessment as a staff development tool for English/language arts teachers. The Writing Assessment Board would conduct regional scoring sessions, with Utah teachers serving as paid scorers. This approach would familiarize teachers with the goals of the assessment, its standards, and its relation to the core curriculum. Teachers, in turn, would be able to provide a steady flow of on-the-spot feedback to the Writing Assessment Board.
3. Develop materials aimed at classroom teachers that would assist them in their work with children. The Writing Assessment Board would develop model lessons and/or staff development videotapes showing teachers how to implement core curriculum standards and thus prepare for the assessment. These materials could be disseminated through the Utah Writing Project summer institute program as well as through its network of teacher/consultants.
4. Conduct inservice sessions at the district level, using papers scored in the assessment. The Writing Assessment Board would help school officials understand areas of strength and weakness in district profiles. With local papers at hand, teachers could then be helped to look beyond holistic scores to diagnostic and instructional implications. Such an approach would also drive home the value of portfolio assessment in district programs.

Specific Issues

Beyond these general policy recommendations, certain specific issues emerge from the pilot test of the Utah Writing Assessment. These are enumerated below, with accompanying recommendations where appropriate.

1. If a decision is made to assess grade 3 students, the only reasonable time for assessment is in the spring. Many students at grade 3 are not sufficiently mature to handle the demands of testing early in the school year. If a program of autumn testing is implemented, grade 4 students should be assessed, not grade 3. We recommend that serious consideration be given to testing of grade 4 (or grade 5) rather than grade 3.
2. Spring testing reveals the effects of teaching for several months; however, autumn testing would presumably enable teachers to emphasize writing during the remainder of the school year. Assuming relatively speedy turn-around on score reports and diagnostic work with papers at a local level, the autumn testing schedule would make instructional sense. If a program of spring testing is initiated, it would seem reasonable to test at grade 3, 7, and 11; 4, 7, and 10; or 5, 8, and 11. If testing is done in the fall, it might be done at 4, 7, and 10; 4, 8, and 12; or 5, 8, and 11. (Each of these sequences provides for an equal number of years between assessments.) Such a program would provide assessment information to all of the schools in Utah. The decision about whether to test during the spring or fall months must be based on the purposes for assessment and the financial commitment of the State Office to assist local districts.

3. At least two prompts should be used at the upper levels of assessment (middle school and high school levels). Multiple prompts will help to ensure that schools attend to all standards in the core, not just ones that are traditionally tested on the assessment.
4. Prewriting sequences should be built in where appropriate on prompts and teachers should have scripted materials to use in working with their classes.

   This prewriting must be brief, however, to provide plenty of time for drafting and proofreading.
5. Teacher-read (oral) directions, with students following along, should be used in the elementary grades; (silent) reading of directions at the upper levels of assessment is appropriate. A summary of key findings from the pilot test of the Utah Writing Assessment is found in the Overview of this document (pp. 4-5).

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APPENDIX A

PILOT TEST SCHOOLS 1987-1988

APPENDIX A: PILOT TEST SCHOOLS 1987-1988

PILOT TEST SCHOOLS 1987-88

District	Superintendent	Principal--Elementary	Principal--Secondary
ALPINE	Clark Cox Alpine School District American Fork, UT 84003 Tele: 756-9671	Stan Harward K-6 Central School 95 N 400 E Pleasant Grove, UT 84062 Tele: 785-3121 Enrollment: 500	Kay Giles 7-9 Orem Jr High School 765 N 600 W Orem, UT 84057 Tele: 225-1700 Enrollment: 974
BEAVER	Lynn Haslem Beaver School District 290 N Main Beaver, UT 84713 Tele: 438-2291	Val Smith K-6 Belknap School Beaver, UT 84713 Tele: 438-2281 Enrollment: 463	
BOX ELDER	Darrell White Box Elder School District 230 W 200 S Brigham City, UT 84302 Tele: 723-5281	Donald Potter K-6 Garland School 250 N Main Garland, UT 84312 Tele: 257-3129 Enrollment: 335	LaMar Bourne 7-8 Box Elder Jr High School 18 S 500 E Brigham City, UT 84302 Tele: 723-3493 Enrollment: 777
CACHE	Clark Puffer Cache School District 2063 N 1200 E Logan, UT 84321 Tele: 752-3925	Clair Larkin K-5 Wellsville School 90 E 100 S Wellsville, UT 84339 Tele: 245-3764 Enrollment: 591	Holly Peterson 6-8 Spring Creek Middle School 350 W 100 N Providence, UT 84332 Tele: 753-6200 Enrollment:
CARBON	Ell B. Sorenson Carbon School District 65 E 400 N PO Box 1438 Price, UT 84501 Tele: 637-1732	John B. Angotti K-6 Castle Heights School 750 N Homestead Blvd Price, UT 84501 Tele: 637-7177 Enrollment: 497	Tonita Crookston 7-9 Mont Harmon Jr High School 60 W 400 N Price, UT 84501 Tele: 637-0510 Enrollment: 739

District	Superintendent	Principal--Elementary	Principal--Secondary
DAVIS	Richard Kendall Davis School District 45 East State Street Farmington, UT 84025 Tele: 451-1251	Forest Barker K-6 Adams School 2500 N 2200 E Layton, UT 84041 Tele: 546-7914 Enrollment: 764	Ross Poore 7-9 Central Davis Jr High School 663 Church Street Layton, UT 84041 Tele: 546-7923 Enrollment: 1,075 Carol Greenwood Syracuse Jr. High 1450 S 2000 W Syracuse, UT 84041
EMERY	Dennis E. Nelson Emery School District 130 N Main Huntington, UT 84528 Tele: 687-9846	Morris Mower K-6 Ferron School Ferron, UT 84523 Tele: 384-2383 Enrollment: 513	Samuel Singleton 7-9 San Rafael Jr High School Ferron, UT 84523 Tele: 384-2335 Enrollment: 351
GRANITE	John Reed Call Granite School District 340 E 3545 S Salt Lake City, UT 84115 Tele: 263-6100	Dale Hartzigson K-3 Jerry D. Pulsipher 4-6 West Kearns School 4900 S 4620 W Kearns, UT 84118 Tele: 968-0552 964-7680 Enrollment: 1,007	Barry Richards 7-9 JFK Jr High School 4495 S 4800 W West Valley City, UT 84120 Tele: 969-6271 Enrollment: 1,387
JORDAN	Raymond Whittenburg Jordan School District 9361 S 300 E Sandy, UT 84070 Tele: 565-7100	Kreig Kelley K-5 Canyon View School 3050 E 7800 S Salt Lake City, UT 84121 Tele: 565-7436 Enrollment: 819	J. Paul Kochevar 6-8 Indian Hills Middle School 1180 E Sanders Road Sandy, UT 84070 Tele: 565-7526 Enrollment: 1,502

District	Superintendent	Principal--Elementary	Principal--Secondary
LOGAN	James Blair Logan City School District 101 West Center Logan, UT 84321 Tele: 752-1811	Larry Jacobsen K-5 Adams School 530 N 400 E Logan, UT 84321 Tele: 752-2275 Enrollment: 488	Raymond Haslam 6-8 Mt. Logan Middle School 875 N 200 E Logan, UT 84321 Tele: 752-4755 Enrollment: 940
NEBO	J. Wayne Nelson Nebo School District 350 S Main Spanish Fork, UT 84660 Tele: 798-8651	Tom Hudson K-7 Santaquin School 25 S 400 W Santaquin, UT 84655 Tele: 754-3611 Enrollment: 514 Send to Robin Fullenbach	Lynn Jones 8-9 Payson Jr High School 1025 S Highway 91 Payson, UT 84651 Tele: 465-9231 Enrollment: 718
OGDEN	James West Ogden School District 2444 Adams Avenue Ogden, UT 84401 Tele: 399-3456	Dale Thompson K-5 Polk School 2615 Polk Avenue Ogden, UT 84403 Tele: 394-3939 Enrollment: 428	Vern Call 6-8 Mound Fort Middle School 1396 Liberty Avenue Ogden, UT 84404 Tele: 399-3456 Enrollment: 594
SALT LAKE CITY	John Bennion Salt Lake City School Dist 440 E 100 S Salt Lake City, UT 84111 Tele: 322-1471	Sally Trost K-6 Highland Park School 1738 E 2700 S Salt Lake City, UT 84105 Tele: 481-4833 Enrollment: 528	Larry Jensen 7-8 Bryant Intermediate School 40 S 800 E Salt Lake City, UT 84102 Tele: 533-3008 Enrollment: 671
SAN JUAN	Hal Jensen San Juan School District 207 N 100 E Monticello, UT 84535 Tele: 587-2254	Kenneth Maughan K-6 Monticello School PO Box 189 Monticello, UT 84535 Tele: 587-2241 Enrollment: 409	Mitchell Kalauli 7-12 Whitehorse High School Montezuma Creek, UT 84534 Tele: 651-3427 Enrollment: 364

District	Superintendent	Principal--Elementary	Principal--Secondary
SEVIER	John Tuft Sevier School District 195 E 500 N Richfield, UT 84701 Tele: 896-4406	Kent Christensen K-5 Salina School 210 W 300 N Salina, UT 84654 Tele: 529-7462 Enrollment: 638 Teacher: Randy Brown	Russell Peterson 6-8 Red Hills Middle School 496 W Center Richfield, UT 84701 Tele: 896-6421 Enrollment: 441
WEBER	Jay Taggart Weber School District 1122 Washington Blvd Ogden, UT 84404 Tele: 479-8889	Cheryl Nash K-6 Washington Terrace School 125 E 4475 S Ogden, UT 84405 Tele: 392-6733 Enrollment: 520	John Bushman 7-9 Roy Jr High School 5400 S 2100 W Roy, UT 84067 Tele: 825-1605 Enrollment: 834

APPENDIX B

PILOT TEST CODING SHEET

APPENDIX B: PILOT TEST CODING SHEET

PILOT TEST

CODING SHEET

DISTRICT	NO.	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	NO.	PROMPT	CONDITION	SECONDARY SCHOOL	NO.	PROMPT	CONDITION
Alpine	1	Central School	1	1	1 (35)	Orem Jr High	17	2	1 (31)
				2	2 (35)	(Sept. 25)		1,2,3,4	4 (31)
Beaver	2	Belknap School	2	1	2 (28)				
				2	1 (29)				
Box Elder	3	Garland School	3	3	1 (36)	Box Elder Jr H S	19	2	3 (33)
				4	2 (37)			1,2,3,4	4 (34)
								1,2,3,4	4 (35)
Cache	4	Wellsville School	4	3	2 (30)	Spring Creek M S	20	1,2,3,4	4 (35)
				4	1 (31)			1,2,3,4	4 (28)
Carbon	5	Castle Heights Sch	5	1	1 (28)	Mont Harmon Jr HS	21	2	1 (32)
				2	2 (29)			1,2,3,4	4 (34)
Davis	6	Adams School	6	1	2 (32)	Central Davis Jr	22	2	2 (35)
				2	1 (33)			1,2,3,4	4 (35)
						Syracuse Jr HS	34	2	2 (24)
Emery	7	Ferron School	7	3	1 (25)	San Rafael Jr HS	23	2	3 (32)
				4	2 (23)			1,2,3,4	4 (32)
Granite	8	West Kearns School	8	3	2 (29)	JFK Jr High Sch	24	1,2,3,4	4 (35)
				4	1 (29)			1,2,3,4	4 (30)
Jordan	9	Canyon View School	9	2	2 (33)	Indian Hills MS	25	2	1 (35)
				1	1 (27)			1,2,3,4	4 (35)
Logan	10	Adams School	10	1	2 (33)	Mt. Logan MS	26	2	2 (27)
				2	1 (33)	(Oct. 5)		1,2,3,4	4 (28)

DISTRICT	NO.	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	NO.	PROMPT	CONDITION	SECONDARY SCHOOL	NO.	PROMPT	CONDITION
Nebo	11	Santaquin School	11	3	1 (25)	Payson Jr HS	27	2	3 (33)
				4	2 (22)			1,2,3,4	4 (31)
Ogden	12	Polk School	12	3	2 (29)	Mound Fort MS	28	1,2,3,4	4 (31)
				4	1 (28)			1,2,3,4	4 (37)
Salt Lake	13	Highland Park Sch	13	1	1 (29)	Bryant Intermed.	29	2	1 (32)
		Sept. 25		2	2 (29)			1,2,3,4	4
San Juan	14	Monticello School	14	1	2 (30)	Whitehorse HS	30	2	2 (21)
				2	1 (30)			1,2,3,4	4 (21)
Sevier	15	Salina School	15	3	1 (31)	Red Hills MS	31	1,2,3,4	4 (34)
				4	2 (31)			1,2,3,4	4 (18)
								1,2,3,4	4 (35)
								1,2,3,4	4 (24)
								1,2,3,4	4 (31)
Weber	16	Washington Terrace	16	3	2 (24)	Roy Jr High Sch	32	2	3 (30)
				4	1 (23)			1,2,3,4	4 (35)

APPENDIX C

TEST ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS

PILOT TEST: UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT, 1987 SITE CODE NUMBER ______________

General Directions for Teachers -- Please Read Carefully

You play a vital role in this assessment of writing performance conducted at grades 3 and 8 by the Utah State Office of Education. In this pilot test, eight writing tasks will be studied under varying conditions. Tests should be given on October 1 or 2, at your option. If you have questions, please call 750-2222.

BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT

Two or three days in advance, prepare your class for the writing assessment on October 1 (or 2). Here are some points to discuss with your students:

1. Purpose. On October 1 (or 2) we will be doing some writing. The purpose of this writing is to show teachers and parents how well Utah students are doing.

2. Topic. You will get directions on what to write about on the day of the test. Then you will have about 30 minutes to develop a good piece of writing.

3. Process. To do a good job of writing, you should plan what you're going to say, then write, and then check it over carefully. If you finish early, you may read a library book. Please don't talk or disturb others during the writing.

4. Length. There isn't any set length for this writing. Just think about what the directions say and do the best you can in following them.

5. Mistakes. If you make mistakes in your writing, or if you want to change something, you can cross through a word and rewrite neatly above your crossout.

6. Assistance. If you don't know what to write, raise your hand and I'll help you with the directions. But I can't help you with the actual writing. We want to see what you can do on your own--without adult help or even a dictionary.

7. Recopying. You won't have time to recopy. So after you've finished writing, make sure to read over your paper and put in any last-minute changes.

8. Handwriting. You may use either printing or cursive handwriting. Bring a sharpened, soft lead (#2) pencil or black pen for the writing test.

9. Materials. I will give you paper to write on. Use one side of the paper only. If you need more paper, let me know and I'll give it to you.

10. Evaluation. Your writing will be graded, but the score doesn't go in my gradebook. Other teachers will read your writing. Do your best work so that our school gets a good score on writing.

NOTE: After discussing the test, help students write down a personal four-digit STUDENT CODE NUMBER for October 1 (or 2). The LAST FOUR DIGITS OF THEIR PHONE NUMBER will work for most students. For students who do not have a home phone (or cannot remember it) assign a random four-digit number. To make a master list of students and code numbers, circulate a sheet on which students write down their names and numbers. Have this sheet for reference on test day.

Before October 1 (or 2), assemble your writing packets, soft lead (#2) pencils, master list of student code numbers, and materials for students who finish early.

DURING THE ASSESSMENT

On October 1 (or 2), plan for a **45 minute** asssessment period. Check the start time when you begin.

Each student should have a soft lead (#2) pencil or black pen. With the class gathered as a group and desks cleared, read (or paraphrase) the following:

1. Today you will be doing some writing as part of a statewide test. In a few moments, I'll hand out writing packets and we'll fill in some numbers before we begin writing. For now, listen to these directions.

2. Write on one side of the page only. Use soft lead (#2) pencil or black pen. If you need extra paper or a pencil during the writing, raise your hand. You may either print or use cursive for this piece of writing.

3. If you make a mistake, or if you want to change something, cross through a word and rewrite neatly above your crossout. You won't have time to recopy, so do your best work in the 30 minutes or so that you have to write.

4. If you finish early, please read a library book (or work on another activity) until I tell you that the writing time is over. Don't talk or disturb others.

5. If you have any questions during the test, raise your hand. I'll be able to help you with directions but not with the actual writing. If you don't know how to spell a word, put down what looks right to you.

6. Remember to do some planning before you begin writing. And it's a good idea to check over your writing carefully when you are finished.

Hand out the writing packets, one per student. Then proceed immediately with the following directions.

7. At the top of the first page of your packet, you see an "A." Fill in your STUDENT CODE NUMBER here. Remember, this is the last four digits of your phone number. Write down this number after "A."

If some students cannot remember their code numbers, refer to your master list.

8. To the right, you see a "B." If you are a boy, put down a "1." If you are a girl, put down a "2." (GENDER CODE)

9. Now you see "C." Write down the number __________. (DISTRICT CODE)

10. Where it says "D" write the number __________. (SCHOOL CODE)

Note: Disregard any other coding that may appear on the sheet.

DURING THE ASSESSMENT (Continued)

Students are now prepared to begin the writing assessment.

NOTE: At grade 3, all students in a given classoom will have the same topic. At grade 8, however, students in a given classroom may have different topics.

NOTE: Four testing conditions are shown below. For the pilot test, it is vital that you, as test monitor, follow only the condition that is checked (X).

_____ Oral reading with teacher-directed prewriting. Read "Background" aloud to the class as students follow along. Direct them to do the three prewriting steps that follow the "Background." Invite a few students to share aloud some of their words and ideas from the three steps. Acknowledge these ideas positively. Then read "Directions" aloud to the class and tell students to begin their planning and writing. (Total time should be about five minutes.)

_____ Oral reading without teacher-directed prewriting. Read "Background" aloud to the class as students follow along. Pause. Then read "Directions" aloud to the class and tell students to begin their planning and writing.

_____ Silent reading with teacher-directed prewriting. Tell students to read "Background" silently. Allow time for this reading. Direct them to do the three prewriting steps that follow the "Background." Allow about three minutes for prewriting. Then tell students to read "Directions" silently and begin their planning and writing. (Total time should be about five minutes.)

_____ Silent reading without teacher-directed prewriting. Tell students to read "Background" silently. Allow time for this reading. Then tell students to read "Directions" silently and begin their planning and writing.

Move around the room and respond to questions regarding directions. Do not provide spelling words, advice about writing, etc.

Make three announcements about time during the assessment:

-- Your time is half up. You have 15 minutes to go.

-- You need to complete your writing in five minutes.

-- Our time is up. Finish the sentence you are writing and close your packet.

Collect the papers after a total elapsed time of **45 minutes**.

AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

1. Fill out the one-page "Teacher Response Form," which accompanies these materials. Put the student papers and questionnaire in the mailback envelope. Give envelope to your school principal.

2. As assessment results become available at your school--probably in early January, 1988--discuss these with your principal and teaching colleagues. Watch for Utah Writing Project workshops on the teaching of writing--or call 750-2222 for further information.

TEACHER RESPONSE FORM -- PILOT TEST, UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT, 10/87

1. In what district do you teach? (Use code number from p. 2 of "General Directions for Teachers") ______________

2. In what school do you teach? (Use code number from p. 2 of "General Directions for Teachers") ______________

3. What form of the assessment did you administer? (See code number in upper right corner of writing prompt sheet used by students) ____________

4. What difficulties did you have with test administration?

5. What difficulties did students have in taking the test?

6. What suggestions would you make for improving the content (writing topic) of the test?

7. What suggestions would you make for improving the test directions?

8. What are some ways to simplify test administration from your point of view?

Many thanks for your cooperation on the pilot test!

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Secondary Education
Logan, Utah 84322-2815
(801) 750-2222

September 3, 1987

Superintendent
School
Street
City, State Zip

Dear Superintendent:

The Utah State Office of Education plans to assess writing performance at grades 3 and 8 during 1988. This summer teachers met to study the Core Curriculum in English/language arts and to develop assessment items in writing that addressed its standards.

We are asking for your cooperation in carrying out a pilot test of the writing assessment. Your district would be one of sixteen which would be involved in the pilot testing. We would like to use two schools in your district, in this case Washington Terrace School and Roy Jr High School with two different teachers and classes at grades 3 and 8.

This pilot test will check the writing tasks, teacher and student directions, and scoring procedures for the Utah Writing Assessment, which will occur in 1988. The pilot test is being conducted by the Utah Writing Project (UWP) under the auspices of the Utah State Office of Education.

We propose to use the principal at each school as the contact person for the test session which is tentatively scheduled for October 1 or 2. The testing will take no more than one class period to administer.

We will share the results of the assessment with each district that participates in the pilot test. If you have any questions or do not want the above schools to participate in the study, please inform us immediately. We can be reached at 750-2222. Your support in this important effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Duke
Co-director, UWP

William Strong
Co-director, UWP

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Secondary Education
Logan, Utah 84322-2815
(801) 750-2222

September 3, 1987

Principal
School
Street
Town, City Zip

Dear Principal:

The Utah State Office of Education plans to assess writing performance at grades 3 and 8 during 1988. Last summer teachers met to study the Core Curriculum in English/Language arts and to develop assessment items in writing that addressed its standards.

Yours is one of thirty-two schools selected as a Utah Writing Assessment pilot test site. We are therefore asking your cooperation in a pilot test at grades 3 and 8 on October 1 or 2 (your option on date). In return we will share the results of this pilot test with you.

This pilot test will check writing tasks, teacher and student directions, and scoring procedures for the Utah Writing Assessment, which will occur during 1988. It is conducted by the Utah Writing Project (UWP) under the auspices of the Utah State Office of Education.

Your responsibilities as a site coordinator for the pilot test are:

1. Obtain the cooperation of two teachers at grade 3 or grade 8, whichever is appropriate for your school. (Note: Each teacher at grade 8 will assess only one class.) Phone in the number of test packets required by each teacher.
2. Receive testing materials, look them over, and distribute to teachers.
3. Serve as a communication link between UWP and teachers, handling any questions the teachers may have and communicating them to UWP.
4. With the cooperation of teachers, monitor the administration of the test on October 1 or 2 and provide UWP with any suggestions for revised procedures.
5. Collect testing materials and mail them back to UWP.

We welcome your leadership in this statewide effort. By September 11, please phone the Utah Writing Project at 750-2222 to indicate whether you are willing to serve as a site coordinator and, if so, the test packets required.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Duke, Co-Director, UWP	William Strong, Co-Director, UWP

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Secondary Education
Logan Utah 84322-2815
(801) 750-2222

MEMORANDUM

TO: Principals participating in Writing Assessment

FROM: Charles Duke and William Strong, co-directors UWP

SUBJECT: Test Packets and Test Administration

DATE: September 16, 1987

We appreciate your serving as a site coordinator in the pilot test of the Utah Writing Assessment. Enclosed in this mailing are test packets for the two teachers participating in the pilot test. Note that the packets have numbers on them; these should correspond to the number of students you identified for us in each class.

With the teachers, review the enclosed "Directions for Teachers" that are a part of each test packet; a copy is provided for you as well.

We ask that persons participating in the pilot test help us with security by not photocopying the assessment or discussing its contents with colleagues or students. We also ask that you be sure to collect all tests, even extras, and return them to us. You and your teachers may be assured that we will maintain strict confidentiality regarding teacher identities in our report of test results.

On the day of the test, please arrange to monitor the administration of the test in at least one classroom. Check to see how clear the directions are, whether the task seems appropriate, and what, if any, difficulties students appear to have. We'd appreciate your sending along your observations when you return the tests.

After the tests have been administered, collect from each teacher the tests and written responses plus the "Teacher Response Form; see that each teacher places his or her tests and form in the envelope in which the tests came; then place both envelopes in the self-addressed, stamped envelope you received and send it to us immediately. In case you misplace the envelope, materials should be returned to:

Utah Writing Project Pilot Test
Department of Secondary Education
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322-2815.

If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 750-2222.

APPENDIX F

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM TEACHER SURVEY

APPENDIX F: REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM TEACHER SURVEY

Grade 3

1. What difficulties did you have with test administration

   a. I didn't make clear that the planning page was not part of the start of the story
   b. Need to state the type of paper to be used.
   c. Before this assignment was given to me--about a week--I had been teaching the children how to "map" story events. Much of that experience flowed through these papers. They still do not have that skill, but it did influence their planning.
   d. Not having the test packet available until morning of test date
   e. Explaining some of the language used in the background and prompt
   f. My students were not accustomed to making a plan before writing so this part was a little difficult for them.
   g. Students wanted help with spelling.
   h. For some students it was too much time; all finished before 30 minutes.
   i. We are on the enhanced schedule and I have basics in the morning--is there a difference between morning and afternoon?
   j. Students should have four or five practice sessions before actual test; the sample exercises would help establish procedures.
   k. Some students asked if they could erase a mistake; the directions state they could cross out a word but really didn't make clear if erasing was allowed.
   l. Some students had trouble with directions and wanted help; I told them words like audience and experience.
   m. It was hard to give instructions in just 15 minutes. I wanted to give more instruction than what was written on instruction sheet
   n. Not interacting with students to develop ideas.

2. What difficulties did students have in taking the test?

   a. Lined paper was too large; third graders can write on regular paper
   b. Need pre-writing time--3rd graders need shorter writing time
   c. Being asked to do thinking and planning
   d. Proofreading was not very evident
   e. Third graders, toward the end of the year, have a pretty good idea of what we mean by main idea and support ideas. At this point in time, though, paragraphs are hard to understand.
   f. Students had hard time understanding questions 1-3 under background (prewriting); words like "unusual" and "describe" are hard for 3rd.
   g. They would often write on the back side of page
   h. They wanted to know how to spell words even after I told them to spell them as best they could
   i. They had difficulties mainly in the "Planning" stage. Some actually wrote instead of jotting things down.
   j. We haven't got to creative writing until now so the students were having a hard time writing sentences and putting thoughts into writing.
   i. No major problems but some wanted to write only one sentence stories

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3. What suggestions would you make for improving the content (writing topic) of the test?

   a. Good one--all children can identify a place
   b. Students enjoyed the assignment topic on their favorite place; it was fairly easy for them to organize their thoughts
   c. Use words like "special" or "a day you enjoyed or didn't like"--words third graders understand now
   d. My student teacher had just had to reprimand some students for playing kissing tag at noon recess and because this was the most recent thing on their minds, they wrote about that instead of a real unusual day. We probably should have waited until this was not such a big issue.
   e. Some of the directions were useful for planning; they could have been repeated again for the actual writing
   f. I liked the writing topic because there were ways to practice it without actually using the topic
   g. The word "possession" was not readily understood by students.
   h. Some students seemed to have difficulty thinking of real events. I tried to steer them away from make believe things; perhaps at this age make believe things might be better?
   i. Every child knew of something they wanted to tell about.

4. What suggestions would you make for improving the test directions?

   a. Perhaps less independent reading
   b. Were covered in a lucid manner.
   c. There has to be a little more teacher direction in oral directed reading without teacher directed prewriting. Student background information should also be on the teacher directions
   d. Is there a special reason for not having students erase?
   e. Include the option of real or imaginary experiences.
   f. I would not put the directions on the same page allotted for "planning."
   g. Include that a story needs a beginnning, middle, and end.
   h. In the directions section it might be helpful if the words following "The reader wants to know..." were in a list for easy reference instead of sentences.
   i. Allow time for questions.

5. What are some ways to simplify test administration?

   a. You've got as simple as possible; don't simplify further.
   b. Lines on writing paper too wide; use regular paper with lines
   c. Nothing, it was fun.
   d. Simplify some of the language for third grade
   e. It was a good idea in my class for students to have an extra sharpened pencil at their desks
   f. I taped a paper on which was their 4 digit code to their desks
   g. Quite pleased with administration
   h. The test administration would go quicker if the teacher filled out the code numbers in advance; then less time would have to be spent on directions
   i. If we were control, we would do it that way; if not, they need some preparation ahead.

Grade 8

1. What difficulties did you have with test administration?
   a. None
   b. Many students forgot #2 pencils or pens because of the three day break between test announcement and administration; test was easy to administer.
   c. No teacher's copy of student writing directions; had to look over child's shoulder to read aloud directions.
   d. Receiving packets earlier than week of administration would be helpful
   e. Total writing time was 30-32 minutes after writing background questions and answers for 5 minutes
   f. I wasn't sure how the time was to be divided; it wasn't clear when I should start watching the clock
   g. My instruction booklet was not marked as to which test condition I was to use so I guessed and hope I did right
   h. Did you want their prewriting?
   i. Students who wrote letters wanted to know how to sign it if it was to remain anonymous. The first one to ask suggested "an eighth grade student" so that it was.
   j. The students were not happy to write.
   k. We had to get some eighth graders from other classes to fill our complement and some teachers didn't like to have their classes interrupted for that purpose; we had 35 students in a room built for 25! We had Homecoming prior to test administration day; home-coming causes students to forget what school is all about; we had some discipline problems at the start of the test.

2. What difficulties did students have taking the test?

   a. No real problems
   b. Most students were able to do the prewriting but coming up with ideas was in many cases hard.
   c. Didn't understand the Rock and Roll instructions; didn't know if Kelly was male or female. The snake piece was a long one.
   d. Wondered about margins; whether they should 3 pages since that number was provided; some thought they should write for 30 minutes.
   e. Students might have had a bit too much time for the letter and the possession; the speech and the snakes seemed harder tasks.
   f. Did not like idea of crossing out mistakes
   g. Questions about titles--should they have one?
   h. Students want directions read to them; they don't want to take responsibility for their own writing.
   i. Should names be put on the papers?
   j. Many of our Navajo students don't read well enough to understand written directions. I had to explain the directions without giving away the test so some students got started late on actual drafting. We've only been teaching writing process for two years
   k. Students seemed to have more problems with understanding and doing-- 8-3-8, 8-4-4.
   l. Students were frustrated because they are used to some kind of prewriting; they were also concerned that they would not have time for revision.

3. What suggestions would you make for improving the content (writing topic) of the test?

   a. Students seemed to be interested; no changes
   b. I like the fact it's a personal topic that each one of them can relate to.
   c. Good topic--perhaps simplify Rock and Roll one; fewer notes for snakes one to be incorporated into paragraph
   d. The letter writing and the favorite possession draw from a student's personal experience and opinions and can, therefore, be done without other specific knowledge or skill. The other two, the speech and the newspaper article call for a sense of audience on the part of the writer and a familiarity with a more objective style of writing. That makes them different kinds of tasks.
   e. Some kids won't or can't handle any topic. The topics seemed like good ones. The fewer directions the better.
   f. The letter worked; students understood with little explanation; the newspaper prompt was confusing. The kids weren't sure which snake to write about. Maybe if you had only had notes on one snake then the kids could jump right in.
   g. 8-4-4 needs to be more relevant; 8-3-8 needs clarity on what they're writing about.
   h. Personal topics are good motivators.
   i. Topics were ones my students do not ordinarily write on.
   j. I think few eighth graders think deeply enough to react in a logical and intelligent way to the issue of rock music; the topics did not seem equitable; the students who wrote the newspaper article worked much harder than the others; they wanted to trade and write a friendly letter.

4. What suggestions would you make for improving the test directions?

   a. None. I really liked the statement in purpose of the assessment to see how well Utah students write.
   b. Outline how the time is to be spent for the 15 min. segment.
   c. They were fine with me; just tell me what to do and I'll do it.
   d. Was it okay to erase?
   e. They're great; maybe specify point of view if you want to in the rock and roll prompt.
   f. None except maybe giving students an example
   g. Ask for specific details and give an example; impt. for this level
   h. Prewriting discussion and activities are always a part of my teaching of writing. This exercise seemed cold; also, my students did not feel comfortable without tools of writing (thesaurus, dictionary, etc.) They are also accustomed to feedback.
   i. They worked well for us!
   j. Students asked if it mattered how short it was
   k. There was no x marked for monitor on condition

5. What are some ways to simplify test administration?

   a. I thought the instructions quite complete.
   b. I think the test is already easy to administer.
   c. My students were more interested in the "why" and "who" of this test

d. Keep it simple--which you did!
e. Directions were clear--especially 1-10 before assessment p. 1
f. The only problems we had were of our own making; if we do it again next year we'll be better prepared.
g. Terminology was a problem for my kids in truly understanding. Navajo students students have difficulty in areas of relevancy; what's relevant to a white student may not be to a Native American.
h. Have them do their best by prewriting, editing, final draft
i. Unless you change the nature of the test, I don't feel the administration needs simplification; students had few questions and seemed to have adequate time.

APPENDIX G

DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING

APPENDIX G: DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING

UWP Writing Assessment Project

Holistic Scoring

Directions to Readers:

The papers you are about to read were written by Utah students. Our efforts today are to score the papers, using a rubric designed specifically for the prompt and the student population. You will receive this rubric separately and will practice with it until you are familiar with its categories and until the group of readers as a whole has developed consistency in its use.

If you are unfamiliar with holistic scoring, you should be aware that research has shown that the process is as valid and reliable as the more traditional--and slower--analytical scoring of writing samples. In holistic scoring, you are to use a "whole impression" of the work which reflects the various characteristics of the scoring rubric to determine where the piece of writing falls on a given scale. No single item or characteristic is necessarily more important than another in this system; in fact, holistic scoring is not designed to be diagnostic but is more useful in showing large scale changes within a given population and for placing students in appropriate courses or programs. Our intent in this particular evaluation project is to determine what the level of skill currently is among 3rd and 8th grade students in Utah.

Since we will be reading a large number of papers and accuracy is of great importance, we ask that you observe the following procedures carefully; if you have questions at any time, feel free to consult the Head Reader.

Before the Official Reading

1. Arrange your materials carefully so that you can refer to them easily and efficiently; you will have the following as resources:
   - a. copy of the prompt used for the writing
   - b. copy of the rubric--you may want to unstaple the pages for easier reference
   - c. copies of "range" markers for each category on the rubric (these will be provided during practice)
   - d. two marked spaces in front of you, one of these will be for papers you are to score; the other will be for papers you have scored and which are ready for pick-up
   - e. pencil for recording scores
2. Feel free to ask questions during the practice session. We need to train quickly, but we also need to understand clearly what we are doing; the Head Reader will attempt to answer your questions. Listen carefully to the discussion, apply the rubric carefully, and observe how your scores compare with those of the group. The basic purpose of the training session is to reach consensus on the application of the rubric to the writing samples.

During the Official Reading

1. Resist the temptation to read an excerpt to another reader; there will be ample time to swap choice bits with each other during the breaks.

2. Give to the Head Reader any illegible papers which you feel are beyond any effort at reading; handwriting on some of the papers will not be good but try not to let that influence you unduly; remember that students had little time to consider overall neatness.

3. Read as quickly as possible and try to score your first impression; if you find yourself re-reading the papers, you probably have lost confidence in your memory of the rubric; review the categories and then start reading again. Remember that the goal is overall impression. Isolating one part over another tends to reduce your effectiveness as a reader.

4. Record the appropriate score in the location as indicated by the following code:

   a. NO COLOR ON FIRST PAGE--record score on the back of the LAST PAGE in the CENTER of that page; be sure the number is formed clearly.

   b. COLOR ON FIRST PAGE--record score at the top right-hand corner of the FIRST PAGE; be certain the number is formed clearly.

5. Place all scored papers on the "Out" pile in front of you; these papers will be picked up periodically. The Head Reader may read some of these at random, simply to insure that all readers are using the rubric appropriately; on occasion, the Head Reader may discuss some of your scores with you to make certain that you and he or she have a consensus on the scores. Remember that the success of this kind of evaluation depends upon consistency in scoring.

Other Considerations

1. We will take periodic breaks--reader fatigue is a definite factor in these sessions--so that you can obtain refreshments, visit the rest rooms, get some fresh air. These breaks, however, will be short--seldom more than ten minutes except for a lunch break. Please be prompt in starting reading again as soon as the signal is given.

2. You will find reading these papers provides you with some insights into how today's students think and also how they respond to a writing situation. You may or may not agree with their stands on an issue or their choices of subject; Your focus at all times, however, must be on evaluating the papers against the rubric, not against your own personal beliefs or expectations.

3. We appreciate the time you are giving us for the scoring session. If it is necessary for you to leave before the time allotted for scoring is over, please inform the Head Reader so that the time you did spend can be recorded.

APPENDIX H

MEAN COMPARISON

APPENDIX H: MEAN COMPARISON

GRADE 3

Comparison of Means

PROMPT	CONDITION		MALES	FEMALES	p-VALUE
Place	Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.27 1.22 66	3.86 1.71 50	0.03*
	Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.41 1.75 53	3.86 1.87 58	0.20
Possession	Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.47 1.36 61	4.29 1.66 51	0.01**
	Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.13 1.46 62	4.41 1.57 61	0.00**
Day	Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.30 1.50 60	2.77 1.46 39	0.08
	Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.63 2.16 52	4.66 2.12 50	0.02*
Scary	Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean Std N	3.47 1.77 57	3.59 1.51 42	0.72
	Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean Std N	2.90 1.55 50	3.31 2.08 49	0.27

GRADE 8

Comparison of Means

PROMPT	**CONDITION**		**MALES**	**FEMALES**	**p-VALUE**
Letter	Silent w/o Prewriting	Mean	3.16	4.25	0.00**
		Std	1.38	1.56	
		N	69	91	
Possession	Oral w/ Prewriting	Mean	3.70	4.84	0.00**
		Std	1.44	1.79	
		N	57	57	
	Oral w/o Prewriting	Mean	3.03	3.79	0.03*
		Std	1.42	1.51	
		N	32	38	
	Silent w/ Prewriting	Mean	4.33	5.35	0.00**
		Std	1.41	1.57	
		N	33	46	
	Silent w/o Prewriting	Mean	3.79	4.27	0.05*
		Std	1.46	1.48	
		N	62	88	
Music	Silent w/o Prewriting	Mean	2.97	4.07	0.00**
		Std	1.38	1.67	
		N	60	87	
Snakes	Silent w/o Prewriting	Mean	4.02	4.67	0.03*
		Std	1.97	1.60	
		N	60	81	

APPENDIX I

THIRD READINGS

APPENDIX I: THIRD READINGS

THIRD READINGS

GRADE 3: NUMBER OF THIRD READINGS BY PROMPT AND CONDITION

PROMPT	CONDITION		TOTALS
	ORAL W/ (1) PREWRITING	ORAL W/O (2) PREWRITING	
Place (1)	1 (.99*)	5 (.95*)	6 (.97*)
Possession (2)	5 (.95*)	12 (.90*)	17 (.93*)
Day (3)	4 (.96*)	2 (.98*)	6 (.97*)
Scary (4)	5 (.95*)	4 (.96*)	9 (.95*)
Totals	15 (.96*)	23 (.94*)	38 (.96*)

*denotes inter-rate agreement

GRADE 8: NUMBER OF THIRD READINGS BY PROMPT AND CONDITION

PROMPT	CONDITION				TOTALS
	(1) ORAL W/ PREWRITING	(2) ORAL W/O PREWRITING	(3) SILENT W/ PREWRITING	(4) SILENT W/O PREWRITING	
Letter (5)				5 (.97*)	5 (.97*)
Possession (6)	10 (.91*)	4 (.91*)	2 (.97*)	10 (.93*)	21 (.93*)
Music (7)				14 (.90*)	14 (.90*)
Snakes (8)					
Totals	10 (.91*)	4 (.91*)	2 (.97*)	29 (.93*)	40 (.93*)

*denotes inter-rater agreement

APPENDIX J

ERROR ANALYSES

APPENDIX J ERROR ANALYSES

THIRD GRADE (SCOREPOINT 8): 1312 total words; mean length = 131.2

		Errors	Error Rate
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
	A. Fragment	7	.005
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	24	.018
	C. On-and-on sentence	2	.002
II.	Usage		
	A. Subject/verb agreement	2	.002
	B. Capitalization	17	.013
III.	Spelling		
	A. Homonyms/contractions	8	.006
	B. General spelling	91	.069

THIRD GRADE (SCOREPOINT 6): 915 total words; mean length = 91.5

		Errors	Error Rate
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
	A. Fragment	7	.008
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	16	.017
	C. On-and-on sentence	7	.008
II.	Usage		
	A. Subject/verb agreement	2	.002
	B. Capitalization	20	.022
III.	Spelling		
	A. Homonyms/contractions	7	.008
	B. General spelling	75	.082

THIRD GRADE (SCOREPOINT 4): 1055 total words; mean length = 1055

	Errors	Error Rate
I. Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
A. Fragment	3	.003
B. Comma splice/fused sentence	24	.023
C. On-and-on sentence	11	.010
II. Usage		
A. Subject/verb agreement	2	.002
B. Capitalization	16	.015
III. Spelling		
A. Homonyms/contractions	10	.009
B. General spelling	95	.090

THIRD GRADE (SCOREPOINT 2): 643 total words; mean length = 64.3 words

	Errors	Error Rate
I. Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
A. Fragment	3	.005
B. Comma splice/fused sentence	22	.034
C. On-and-on sentence	8	.012
II. Usage		
A. Subject/verb agreement	0	.000
B. Capitalization	27	.042
III. Spelling		
A. Homonyms/contractions	2	.003
B. General spelling	94	.146

EIGHTH GRADE (SCOREPOINT 8): 2565 total words; mean length = 256.5 words

I. Punctuation (sentence end stop)	Errors	Error Rate
A. Fragment	2	.001
B. Comma splice/fused sentence	26	.010
II. Usage		
A. Subject/verb agreement	2	.001
B. Capitalization	5	.002
III. Spelling		
A. Homonyms/contractions	2	.001
B. General spelling	25	.010

EIGHTH GRADE (SCOREPOINT 6): 3132 total words; mean length = 313.2 words

I. Punctuation (sentence end stop)	Errors	Error Rate
A. Fragment	9	.003
B. Comma splice/fused sentence	36	.011
II. Usage		
A. Subject/verb agreement	2	.001
B. Capitalization	7	.002
III. Spelling		
A. Homonyms/contractions	12	.004
B. General spelling	15	.016

EIGHTH GRADE (SCOREPOINT 4): 2208 total words; mean length = 220.8 words

		Errors	Error Rate
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
	A. Fragment	7	.003
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	30	.014
II.	Usage		
	A. Subject/verb agreement	0	.000
	B. Capitalization	4	.002
III.	Spelling		
	A. Homonyms/contractions	22	.010
	B. General spelling	87	.039

EIGHTH GRADE (SCOREPOINT 2): 1372 total words; mean length = 137 words

		Errors	Error Rate
I.	Punctuation (sentence end stop)		
	A. Fragment	1	.001
	B. Comma splice/fused sentence	17	.012
II.	Usage		
	A. Subject/verb agreement	1	.001
	B. Capitalization	12	.009
III.	Spelling		
	A. Homonyms/contractions	19	.014
	B. General spelling	38	.028

APPENDIX K

WRITING PROMPT MATERIALS

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87 3 - 1 - 1

A __________ B __________ C __________ D _____ ___ ___ ___

Having Fun at a Favorite Place

Background

Most people have had a fun experience at a favorite place. For you, it might be building a hut in the backyard, playing ball in a neighborhood park, roasting marshmallows at a campground, or riding the roller coaster at Disneyland. Think about what you really like to do at your favorite place.

1. Write down a favorite place where you have fun.

2. What makes this place fun for you? Write this down.

3. What words describe your favorite place? List them.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time when you had fun at your favorite place. The reader would like to know what this place is like, so describe it. Tell what you did, how you felt, and why it was fun to you.

____ ____ ____

3 - 1 - 2

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

Having Fun at a Favorite Place

Background

Most people have had a fun experience at a favorite place. For you, it might be building a hut in the backyard, playing ball in a neighborhood park, roasting marshmallows at a campground, or riding the roller coaster at Disneyland. Think about what you really like to do at your favorite place. Use this page to plan your writing.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time when you had fun at your favorite place. The reader would like to know what this place is like, so describe it. Tell what you did, how you felt, and why it was fun to you.

____ ____ ____

3 - 2 - 2

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it. Use this page to plan your writing.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about when you got your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

3 - 2 - 1

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

____ ____ ____

A __________ B __________ C __________ D ________

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it.

1. Write down your favorite possession.

2. What makes this possession special to you? Write this down.

3. What words describe your favorite possession? List them.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Then, beginning on the next page, tell a story about the time you received your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

____ ____ ____

3 - 3 - 1

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

An Unusual Day at School

Background

All of us have had an unusual day at school. For you, it might have been a a dress-up day, a fight on the school playground, or a substitute teacher. Maybe you won an award or celebrated a holiday. Think about a day at school that really stands out in your mind. Use this page to plan your writing.

1. Write down an unusual day at school.

2. What made this day so unusual or different? Write this down.

3. What words describe this unusual day? List them.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about an unusual day at school. The reader would like to know what this day was like, so describe it. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you remember this unusual day at school.

___ ___ ___

3 - 3 - 2

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

An Unusual Day at School

Background

All of us have had an unusual day at school. For you, it might have been a dress-up day, a fight on the school playground, or a substitute teacher. Maybe you won an award or celebrated a holiday. Think about a day at school that really stands out in your mind. Use this page to plan your writing.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about an unusual day at school. The reader would like to know what this day was like, so describe it. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you remember this unusual day at school.

____ ____ ____

3 - 4 - 1

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A _________ B _________ C _________ D_________ _

A Scary Experience

Background

Most people have had a scary experience. Maybe they were frightened by a snake, or big dog or even a bee. Maybe they were scared by a bully at school. Maybe they were lost in a mall or frightened by an audience. Think about a scary experience you have had and why you still remember it. Use this page to plan your writing.

1. Write down a place where you were scared.

2. What made this experience scary? Write this down.

3. What words describe this scary experience? List them.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time you were scared. The reader wants to know where you were and what made you feel scared. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you still remember this scary experience.

____ ____ ____

3 - 4 - 2

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

A Scary Experience

Background

Most people have had a scary experience. Maybe they were frightened by a snake, or big dog or even a bee. Maybe they were scared by a bully at school. Maybe they were lost in a mall or frightened by an audience. Think about a scary experience you have had and why you still remember it.

Directions

Use this page to plan your writing. Beginning on the next page, tell a story about a time you were scared. The reader wants to know where you were and what made you feel scared. Tell what happened, how you felt, and why you still remember this scary experience.

____ ____ ____

8 - 1 - 4

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A __________ B __________ C __________ D __________

Background

Assume that your principal has received the following letter with a note asking that it be passed on to an eighth grader for a response. The letter has now been given to you.

Dear Eighth Grader,

I will be moving to your area and will be in the eighth grade at your school next year. Please write me a letter telling me about your school.

I would especially like to know about teachers, classes, activities, and anything else that will help me fit in to the school.

Write soon.

Sincerely,

Kelly Green

Directions

Write a letter to Kelly that tells about your school. Use your own mailing address for the return address so that if Kelly wants to write for more information, you will receive the letter. The principal has Kelly's address and will see that your letter is sent. Since Kelly has never visited your school, provide as much helpful information in your letter as you can. Be certain to include the information Kelly has requested. Write only on one side of the page. Begin your letter on the next page.

___ ___ ___

8 - 2 - 4

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it. Use this page to plan your writing.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about when you got your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

___ ___ ___

8 - 2 - 3

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

How I Got My Favorite Possession

Background

Like most people, you probably own something that is very special. It might be a pet, a toy, a book, or something you wear. Maybe this possession is special because of the person who gave it to you or because you earned it yourself. Think about the day you got a favorite possession and why you like it. Use this page to plan your writing.

1. Write down your favorite possession.

2. What makes this possession special to you? Write this down.

3. What words describe your favorite possession? List them.

Directions

Beginning on the next page, tell a story about the time you received your favorite possession. The reader would like to know what it looks like, so describe it. Tell what happened when you got it, how you felt, and why it is important to you.

____ ____ ____

8 - 3 - 4

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________

Background

Parents and students at your school are divided in their opinions about the effect of rock music on students. Some want to eliminate all rock music on radio stations and at school dances. Others don't view rock music as a problem.

Because the issue is one that has caused great interest among people in your community, the local radio station has scheduled a public meeting where people can speak about this issue.

Directions

Decide which side of this issue you favor. Write a speech designed to persuade others to agree with you. Your speech should include personal experience and/or other evidence to support your position. Your audience will consist of both parents and other students.

___ ___ ___

8 - 4 - 4

UTAH WRITING ASSESSMENT -- PILOT TEST 10/87

A ________ B ________ C ________ D __________

Background

John Burton, an expert on snakes, presented an assembly in your school auditorium. He brought with him a live rattlesnake, an Indian python, and a king cobra. You are on the newspaper staff at your school and have been asked to write a news story about the assembly.

Directions

Write a news story about the assembly for your school newspaper. Assume you have taken the following notes. Select the information that you can use to write an effective news story. Remember that the first paragraph of a news story contains the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why.) Organize your remaining information so that it is interesting and easy for your readers to understand.

YOUR NOTES

Diamond Rattlesnake

named Elvis
has long hollow fangs
is most dangerous rattler in U.S.
rests with body coiled
has hollow teeth like hypodermic needles
raises upper third of body into S-shape when angry
stabs prey
warns of danger with rattle
swallows food whole
lives in U.S.
strikes full length of S-shape
gives birth to live babies

Python

named Crackin
8 ft. from India
held by 14 members of audience
lays eggs
is sluggish, lazy
is found near water
is not poisonous
kills by constricting
large pythons kill goats, pigs, and deer
python in Malaysia ate a 14 year old boy

King Cobra

named Tinkerbell
is 3 ft. snake from India
strikes slowly
attacks without being angered
is hooded
bites and chews with short fangs as venom runs into wound
has deadly bite with no antidote
was shedding and was irritable and nervous
doesn't move to snake charmers' music.
Sways to charmers' movement
king cobra kills 25,000 Indian people per year
large king cobras have enough venom to kill hundreds of people